

The Literary Figure of Fíthal
Christopher Guy Yocum

Ph. D.
The University of Edinburgh
2009

Abstract

This thesis explores the literary figure of the mythical early Irish judge, Fíthal, from the earliest literary reference to him, c. 800, until MacPherson's *Ossian* of the mid-eighteenth century. It does so by close study of the texts within which Fíthal appears, with close attention to their assumptions and purposes. From this series of close studies we can chart the developing character of Fíthal from juridical authority in the legal and legalistic texts to ideal judge or chief judge in the wider literary tradition.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters, a general introduction, and one appendix. Chapter 1 contains a literature review of the major authors and disciplines which contributed to the thesis. Chapter 2 explains Fíthal's position as a Wisdom Figure and the international background of Irish didactic literature. Chapters 3 and 4 contain the survey of Fíthal's existence in Irish literature including discussion of the authorial intent underlying each manifestation. Chapter 5 is a new critical edition of the most important poem concerning Fíthal. Chapter 6 is a discussion of some hitherto unexplored but important facets of Fíthal's character and an assessment of the theoretical writings which have implications for an understanding of his status.

This thesis contributes to the continuing debate concerning the relationship between early Irish law and early Irish literature while simultaneously updating and revising scholarly knowledge concerning Fíthal. The thesis ranges widely over early Irish literature as it touches on Fíthal and explains his role in the literature in both its native and international context. It is hoped that this treatment of a relatively obscure but widespread figure will demonstrate how it is possible within the extant evidence to capture a character with a continuing presence in the tradition – a conclusion with considerable implications for our understanding of the tradition itself.

This thesis is the result of research work undertaken at the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, and is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

I, Christopher Guy Yocum, hereby certify and declare that all the work herein has been carried out by myself unless otherwise stated, and the thesis has been composed under the supervision of Professor William Gillies and Dr. James E. Fraser.

March 2008

For My Grandmother and Parents

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several people who were instrumental in the creation of this work:

- Professor William Gillies who gave generously of his time, wise counsel, encouragement, and assistance with textual difficulties and difficult texts.
- Dr. James E. Fraser who held me to the highest academic standards.
- Nancy J. Fowler whose support was invaluable.
- Brian and Arnot McDonald whose friendship has been at the core of my time in Scotland.
- Karen Bek-Pedersen who provided a welcome insight into early Medieval thought and literature.

Contents

Contents	i
Introduction	vii
0.1 Terminology	viii
0.2 Methodology	viii
0.3 Theoretical Considerations	ix
0.4 Fíthal the Judge	xi
0.5 Conclusion	xi
1 Literature Review	1
1.1 Early Scholars	1
1.2 Modern Scholars	5
1.3 Theoretical Scholars	9
1.4 Archaeological and Anthropological Scholars	11
1.5 Biblical Wisdom Scholars	14
1.6 Vernacular Medieval Wisdom Literature Scholars	15
1.7 Medieval Irish Biblical Studies Scholars	16
1.8 Literary Criticism and Folklore Scholars	18
1.9 Early Irish History Scholars	20
1.10 Secondary Sources for Fíthal	21
1.11 Conclusion	22
2 Fíthal and Wisdom Literature in Early Ireland	24
2.1 Universal	25
2.1.1 Styles of Universal Wisdom Literature	26
2.1.2 Wisdom Figures	29
2.1.3 Wisdom and The Law	30
2.2 Biblical/Classical	32
2.2.1 The Law in the Biblical and Classical Traditions	38

2.3	The Irish	42
2.3.1	The Unique Content of Irish Wisdom Literature	45
2.3.2	Personification of Wisdom	47
2.3.3	Saints and Wisdom Literature	48
2.3.4	Historical Uses of Wisdom Literature	50
2.4	Fíthal in Irish Wisdom Literature	52
2.5	Conclusion	55
3	Fíthal in Prose	60
3.1	Decision as to Cormac's Sword	61
3.1.1	Previous Scholarship	64
3.1.2	The Text	64
3.1.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	65
3.1.4	Discussion	66
3.2	Extract from the Book of Fermoy	68
3.2.1	Previous Scholarship	69
3.2.2	The Text	69
3.2.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	69
3.2.4	Discussion	70
3.3	Forbuis Droma Damhghaire	72
3.3.1	Previous Scholarship	73
3.3.2	The Text	73
3.3.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	74
3.3.4	Discussion	75
3.4	Bruiden na hAlmaine	76
3.4.1	Previous Scholarship	76
3.4.2	The Text	77
3.4.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	77
3.4.4	Discussion	78
3.5	Advice for Finding a Good Wife	79
3.5.1	Previous Scholarship	79
3.5.2	The Text	80
3.5.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	81
3.5.4	Discussion	81
3.6	Cormac's Glossary	83
3.6.1	Previous Scholarship	83
3.6.2	The Text	84

3.6.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	84
3.6.4	Discussion	84
3.7	Cormac's Dream	85
3.7.1	Previous Scholarship	85
3.7.2	The Text	86
3.7.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	86
3.7.4	Discussion	87
3.8	Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the Senchas Már	87
3.8.1	Previous Scholarship	88
3.8.2	The Text	89
3.8.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	89
3.8.4	Discussion	90
3.9	Finn'sruth Fíthail	91
3.9.1	Previous Scholarship	91
3.9.2	The Text	92
3.9.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	92
3.9.4	Discussion	93
3.10	Acallam na Senórach	95
3.10.1	Previous Scholarship	95
3.10.2	The Text	96
3.10.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	96
3.10.4	Discussion	97
3.11	Cambrensis Eversus	98
3.12	Foras Feasa ar Éirinn	99
3.12.1	Previous Scholarship	99
3.12.2	The Text	100
3.12.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	100
3.12.4	Discussion	101
3.13	Archaeological Evidence For Fíthal?	102
3.14	Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae	102
3.15	Aí Emnach	103
3.16	Conclusion	103
4	Fíthal in Poetry	106
4.1	Fíthal in Legal Poetry	107
4.1.1	Fíthal's <i>Roscad</i> Judgement in Favour of Cormac	107
4.1.1.1	Previous Scholarship	108

4.1.1.2	The Text	109
4.1.1.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	109
4.1.1.4	Discussion	110
4.1.2	An Address to a Student of Law	112
4.1.2.1	Previous Scholarship	112
4.1.2.2	The Text	112
4.1.2.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	112
4.1.2.4	Discussion	113
4.1.3	Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend	114
4.1.3.1	Previous Scholarship	114
4.1.3.2	The Text	114
4.1.3.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	115
4.1.3.4	Discussion	115
4.2	Fíthal and Fenian Poetry	116
4.2.1	Duanaire Finn VI	117
4.2.1.1	Previous Scholarship	117
4.2.1.2	The Text	117
4.2.1.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	118
4.2.1.4	Discussion	118
4.2.2	Duanaire Finn XLIII	119
4.2.2.1	Previous Scholarship	119
4.2.2.2	The Text	120
4.2.2.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	120
4.2.2.4	Discussion	121
4.2.3	Duanaire Finn XLVII	122
4.2.3.1	Previous Scholarship	124
4.2.3.2	The Text	124
4.2.3.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	124
4.2.3.4	Discussion	125
4.3	Miscellaneous	128
4.3.1	Ag so chugad, a Chormaic	128
4.3.1.1	Previous Scholarship	129
4.3.1.2	The Text	129
4.3.1.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	129
4.3.1.4	Discussion	130
4.3.2	Metrical Dindsenchas	130
4.3.2.1	Previous Scholarship	132

4.3.2.2	The Text	132
4.3.2.3	Fíthal in the Context of This Text	133
4.3.2.4	Discussion	133
4.3.3	MacPherson's Ossian	134
4.4	Conclusion	136
5	Edition of a Dialogue between Cormac and Fíthal	137
5.1	Discussion of Manuscript Witnesses	139
5.1.1	'A': TCD MS 1339 (The Book of Leinster)	139
5.1.2	'B': Rawl B512 116v b	139
5.1.3	'C': TCD 1337 (H.3.18) p. 40 b	140
5.1.4	'F': MS. Ir. d. 5.	141
5.2	The Prologue	141
5.3	Features of the Poem	142
5.4	Dating the Poem	143
5.5	Editorial Methodology	144
5.6	The Prologue of <i>Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail</i>	144
5.7	Translation	145
5.8	Edition of <i>Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail</i>	145
5.9	Translation	147
5.10	Notes	148
5.11	Literary Analysis	149
5.12	Conclusion	150
6	Concepts of Fíthal	151
6.1	Genealogy of Fíthal	152
6.1.1	The Differing Genealogies of Fíthal	153
6.1.2	Reconciling the Differing Genealogies	157
6.2	Aspects of Fíthal's Character	160
6.2.1	Fíthal as Wisdom Figure	160
6.2.2	Fíthal as Literary Figure	161
6.2.3	Fíthal as Judge	163
6.2.4	Fíthal Compared to Other Mythological Figures	165
6.3	Fíthal in a Theoretical Context	167
6.3.1	Ireland's Indo-European Heritage	168
6.3.2	Ireland's European Connection	171
6.3.3	Other Theoretical Positions	173
6.3.4	Discussion of Theoretical Positions	174

6.3.5	Fíthal's Theoretical Position	178
6.4	Conclusion	183
7	Conclusions	186
A	Diplomatic Editions and Translations of Dialogue	190
A.1	TCD MS 1339 (The Book of Leinster) pg. 149	190
A.2	Rawl. B512 f. 116v. B	191
A.3	Rawl. B512 f. 116v. B (Prologue)	192
A.4	TCD 1337 (H.3.18) pg. 40	192
	Fithell dr̄c <i>fria</i> Corbmac iar nol fleide bice <i>brigmaire</i> secha	192
	Bibliography	194

Introduction

Early Irish literature is the earliest large corpus of vernacular literature in Western Europe. This corpus stands as a unique testament to the scribes who transmitted it through the centuries: first in monasteries and later as commissioned by chiefs of the clans of Ireland, down to the seventeenth century collapse of the old order. This body of literature embraces many genres, from mythological to legal. The area studied in this thesis is the common ground between Irish prose and poetic literature. To explore this topic in depth, it is useful to focus on a particular character who exemplifies the connection between the legal and literary traditions in Ireland. One of the few characters to appear in both literatures is the legendary judge of early Irish law, Fíthal. Fíthal is a relatively obscure character, but one who makes at least an appearance in a wide range of texts, from early legal tracts to late Finn tales and ballads, and about whom there is a certain continuity of portrayal throughout. The purpose of this thesis is to survey the occurrences of Fíthal in both legal and literary sources, and to ascertain just how ‘concrete’ and consistent is his ‘character’ in the texts through time and across genres, and also what this tells us about the tradition itself. To be successful, this kind of enquiry requires one to allow for the existence and interplay of universal, Christian, and more localised themes and stereotypes in wisdom literature. To anticipate, the case of Fíthal demonstrates that early Irish law was influenced by international wisdom literature, and that early Irish tale literature was influenced by both international wisdom literature and by early Irish law.

While Fíthal is obscure in comparison to well-known literary characters, he has attracted a certain amount of scholarship. Colin Ireland, most importantly, has recently reconsidered the *Senbríathra Fíthail*, which had been previously ascribed to Fíthal by scholars such as Rudolf Thurneysen and Roland Smith. Their contributions to scholarship will be explored anon.¹ Ireland utilised many of the stories and poems within which Fíthal appeared, in an attempt to associate the *Senbríathra Fíthail* with Aldfrith of Northumbria.² Fíthal as a character, however,

¹Roland M. Smith, ‘The *Senbriathra Fithail* and Related Texts’, *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928); Roland M. Smith, ‘Fíthal and Flann Fína’, *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930); Roland M. Smith, ‘Further Light on the Finnśruth Fíthail’, *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931); Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Aus dem irischen Recht III’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 15 (1925); Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Aus dem irischen Recht IV’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 16 (1927).

²Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

was tangential to Colin Ireland's work. This thesis aims to present a complete survey of the texts within which Fíthal appears, and its focus is on Fíthal. At the heart of our project is an exposition of the part portrayed by Fíthal in each text, together with an assessment of its status within the literary tradition.

While the textual analysis of the particular texts in which Fíthal appears is at the core of the thesis, the international context of Irish literature, especially the wisdom literature of early Medieval Europe and its connections to Biblical and Classical works, are explored. From these perspectives and taking account of relevant scholarly approaches, a theoretical place for Fíthal is constructed. This offers a broader perspective on the imagined character of Fíthal and his position as a 'player' in Irish literature.

0.1 Terminology

Three of the terms which are used in this thesis require definition at the outset: 'early Irish literature', 'authors of early Irish literature', and 'early Irish studies'. Both 'early Irish literature' and 'early Irish studies' are vague and if used without prior elaboration could cause confusion. The term 'early Irish literature' as used in this thesis refers to the literature, both Latin and vernacular, written in Ireland or by Irishmen on the European Continent from the earliest examples of writing down to the last backward-looking compilations, the *Annals of the Four Masters* and Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*. The political and other changes which occurred in Ireland in the seventeenth century fundamentally altered the nature of the literature. Similarly, the term 'early Irish studies' encompasses the modern study of all of the political and cultural activity of the literary period down to the same stopping point. Finally, 'authors of early Irish literature' recognises the fact that most of early Irish literature is anonymous; and even where an author is credibly named we cannot be sure that we have the 'author's text' as it was originally composed, because of the liberties that 'scribes' routinely took with the material before them. To acknowledge this dynamic quality in the textual tradition of early Irish literature, we use 'authors of early Irish literature' to refer to both those who originally composed the literature and those who transmitted it, often in changed form, in the manuscripts.

0.2 Methodology

Given that the core of this thesis is a corpus of texts, it is important to state the principles by which it has been constituted. First, a text is included in this corpus if Fíthal is explicitly mentioned by name in the text (including scribal contractions of his name) or, in the case of the law text *Aí Ennach*, if it is ascribed to Fíthal somewhere in the corpus of early Irish literature. Because Fíthal appears in many different contexts in early Irish literature, a broad range of texts,

from the eighth century to seventeenth century, is represented. In an exception to this general policy a piece of archaeological evidence which has been tentatively associated with Fíthal by some modern scholars is included here for the sake of completeness. Likewise, Fíthal's occurrences in MacPherson's *Ossian* are included, though they post-date our period of study and emanate from a largely transformed cultural setting.

Studying Fíthal as a character involves both synchronic and diachronic considerations. The most significant shift occurred at the point where Fíthal moved from early Irish law into early Irish literature. Other developments are not so easily pin-pointed in time, because texts are usually datable only in general terms (e. g. on linguistic grounds) and absolute dates are rare. Nevertheless, a general line of development can be identified, and texts can mostly be placed in relative sequence along that line. Additionally, it is possible to discern distinct strands of tradition relating to Fíthal, whose development must have occurred more or less simultaneously. Where possible these 'threads' are kept separate in our presentation.

While these aims are simple to enumerate, several different kinds of analysis are needed to enable each text to contribute its part of the picture of Fíthal as the character developed from its first appearance until its last. More could doubtless be said about some of them, but they constitute at least a contribution to the study of the connections between early Irish law and literature.

0.3 Theoretical Considerations

While the methods employed in this thesis are theoretically straightforward, the interpretation of its findings is more complicated. The status of early Irish literature has been a contested topic since the late nineteenth century or earlier, and questions of historicity versus mythical or fictional status impinge on our texts at many junctures.

As regards the 'nativist' or 'anti-nativist' interpretations of literary tradition, this thesis is uncommitted. This stems from the author's belief that neither approach, in a 'pure' form, can adequately explain the conditions in which early Irish literature and law was written. More generally, we take it as read that there is an ineffable gap between, on the one hand, those who wrote and copied the texts and their intended audience and, on the other, those who read them today.³ While this gap is ineffable, however, its existence does not invalidate the search which

³Some philosophers of history maintain that this gap can be bridged by the idea of the 'presence of the past' but this holds dangers of its own. See Eelco Runia, 'Spots of Time', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Presence Achieved in Language (With Special Attention Given to the Presence of the Past)', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006); F. R. Ankersmit, "'Presence" and Myth', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006); Ewa Domanska, 'The Material Presence of the Past', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006), Michael Bentley, 'Past and "Presence": Revisiting Historical Ontology', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006).

drives this thesis; we firmly believe that theoretical cynicism holds no path to enlightenment.

Our open-minded approach to the subject permits us to draw on differing theoretical approaches, including those of Georges Dumézil.⁴ We refer in particular to his identification of three major functions within the mythology of the descendants of the Indo-Europeans, the first being those of the religious and, in some degree, the intellectual class of people, the second comprising those of the warrior class, and the third those of the farming class. These three classes were reflected in their gods and goddesses and, indeed, in their interactions with one another. It will be shown how Fíthal (not without complication) can be seen as falling within the first function in terms of Dumézil's theory.

While Dumézil's historical-comparative framework places his work, when applied in the Irish context, firmly within the 'nativist' tradition, it is equally important for us to draw on synchronic, 'eurocentric' thinking in other respects. This approach stresses contemporary literary connections between Ireland and the European Continent.⁵ It highlights the intellectual borrowing, by Irish scholars and literati into their own literary traditions as, for example, in ecclesiastical intrusions into early Irish literature and law. Fíthal is only tangentially associated with this activity when he appears in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*. Here, however, Fíthal is introduced under the heading of Natural Law, which, in effect, categorises him as a wisdom figure and judge in the native tradition.⁶ It is as a wisdom figure and as an educator of lawyers in the native law that he appears for the most part, as we shall show.

It will also become clear that this thesis does not subscribe to any particular theory about the 'origins' or 'significance' of Fíthal. Each occurrence of Fíthal within early Irish literature is introduced in a factual way, and any applicable approaches are referred to without prejudice. After all the evidence has been presented in this manner, a possible way of understanding Fíthal's career within early Irish literature is proposed. While it is possible that Fíthal could be more adequately placed within different theoretical paradigms, we feel that the evidence here presented for a general outline of Fíthal's character development can stand scrutiny for the time being.

We are conscious that some questions could be pursued further, e. g. philological reconstruction of Fíthal's name. A firm understanding of the onomastic possibilities could help determine when and how he could have entered the tradition, e. g. in Dumézilian terms. A new edition of

⁴C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966); Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991).

⁵The 'canonical' texts of this creed are: Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, 'The Laws of the Irish', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984); Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

⁶John Carey, 'An Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Ériu* 45 (1994); Peter Smith, 'Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend: A Middle-Irish Poem on the Authors and Laws of Ireland', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994).

the *Finnsruth Fíthail* could also deepen our understanding of Fíthal's exact role in early Irish legal literature.

0.4 Fíthal the Judge

To anticipate the results of our investigation, a short introduction to the character of Fíthal is subjoined here. Fíthal's earliest appearance, in *Finnsruth Fíthail*, is as a teacher of early Irish law. In the literature about Cormac mac Airt, he became the chief judge and jurist to the High King of Ireland. The connection between Cormac and Fíthal was an enduring feature of Fíthal's 'dossier'. The relationship between Cormac and Fíthal is portrayed in the literature as almost always close and friendly. While this friendship may be an expression of the theoretical ideal of the king/judge relationship, it works also at the purely literary level, by helping to cement the bonds between the two fictional characters. These bonds, in fact, withstand attempts by other authors to affiliate Fíthal more closely to Finn mac Cumail.

While Fíthal has a continuing presence in the saga and tale literature, his status as a judge was preserved by the legal writers. He was accredited with writing the law tract *Aí Emnach* and revered generally as one of the 'fathers' of early Irish law. Thus he functioned simultaneously as an early Irish jurist in the eyes of those who wrote the legal tracts, and as a hero of the golden age of Cormac mac Airt in the literary traditions. It may be that connections (or non-connections) between early Irish literature and law can be constructed from close comparison of distinctions like this. However, we argue that more widely formed research needs to be completed, drawing in such comparable figures as Morann and Caratnia, before we can reach a satisfactory answer to this question.

0.5 Conclusion

The overall structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 1 contains a literature review, including remarks on the history of Celtic scholarship as it relates to the thesis. Chapter 2 contains an exploration of wisdom literature in general from three perspectives: universal, Biblical/Classical, and native Irish. This explores the way in which Fíthal, and early Irish jurists in general, were conceived as keepers of the traditional wisdom and how this native understanding inter-connects with international and universal wisdom traditions. Chapters 3 and 4 present and analyse each reference to Fíthal within the corpus of early Irish literature, Chapter 3 contains the prose references and Chapter 4 the poetical references to Fíthal. For ease of comparison, Each text is treated in five sections: Introduction, Previous Scholarship, Text, Context, and Discussion. Chapter 5 contains a critical edition of the dialogue between Cormac and Fíthal, which represents a pivotal point in the literary development of the character of Fíthal. Chapter 6 reviews some

material and includes general observations concerning Fíthal and includes a discussion of Fíthal's place within early Irish literature as a whole. Chapter 7 contains conclusions and observations on directions for further research.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

The primary literature which concerns Fíthal is a clearly defined subset of the entirety of the Irish corpus. Because of this, the primary literature is discussed in depth in chapters 3 and 4. The current chapter surveys the most often referenced secondary sources and authors in this area. The literature review reflects the extent of the field of Celtic Studies and does not propose to be exhaustive, but merely representative of the current state of scholarship.

The difficulty with any enquiry in a field like Celtic Studies is that it draws on such varied disciplines as Archaeology and Literature and encompasses much in other disciplines. Any of the secondary material that would contribute to a study of Fíthal has by necessity a literary dimension. However, as will be seen in Chapter 3, Archaeology does appear in the analysis. In most cases, the primary source material and the secondary sources are closely aligned, since scholars in Celtic Studies often combine a literary analysis within critical editions. Hence secondary literature referred to in this chapter corresponds to primary literature referred to in chapters 3 and 4.

1.1 Early Scholars

As is common in Celtic Studies, the study of language was the foremost stimulus to the development of the discipline. In 1786, William Jones, a judge in India, the then colony of the British Empire, observed in his grammar of Sanskrit that this language closely resembled Greek and Latin. Later in his career, he widened the relationships to Gothic, Persian, and Celtic. His observations proved to be correct and by the beginning of the nineteenth century the science of philology was well established. In tandem with the ‘Celtomania’ that gripped the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a more scholarly view of the literature of Ireland and Wales began to emerge.

In terms of Celtic languages specifically, Johann Kaspar Zeuss extensively examined the

early Irish glossed manuscripts in Continental Europe in the nineteenth century. His *Grammatica Celtica* firmly placed Celtic in the Indo-European family of languages.¹ His work stimulated a number of scholars to begin editing and translating the corpus of early Irish literature in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but outstanding among these was Rudolf Thurneysen. His philological studies replaced those of Zeuss, and his literary studies included important articles on *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.² His *Handbuch des Alt-irischen: Grammatik, Texte und Wörterbuch* which was originally published in 1909³ and translated into English by D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin with many changes prepared by Thurneysen himself entitled *A Grammar of Old Irish*, is used today as a teaching tool.⁴ In terms of Fíthal and the literature attached to him, Thurneysen, who worked extensively on the early Irish Laws, edited the *Senbríathra Fíthail* from the Book of Leinster,⁵ which Colin Ireland has revised in his new critical edition of the text.⁶

One of the earliest scholars to study Celtic as a grouping of languages rather than an ethnonym was Sir John Rhŷs who was the first chair of Celtic at Oxford University. His work on the philology of Welsh⁷ and other Celtic languages proved foundational for Celtic Studies and led to the great *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen*.⁸ Oxford's creation of a Chair of Celtic also inspired other universities around Britain and Ireland to appoint scholars to similar positions.

An early scholar of medieval Ireland who is important for the subject of this thesis in particular is Roland Smith. Four articles by him are especially important in terms of Fíthal. First, he wrote an analysis of *Finnsruth Fíthail* in which he identified its key feature, the formulaic structure to the questions which Socht poses to Fíthal.⁹ He continued this research by searching out all places in Irish literature which contained the formula, though some of these proposed references are clearly not related to *Finnsruth Fíthail*.¹⁰ In another article, he attempted

¹Johann Kaspar Zeuss, *Grammatica Celtica*, vol. 2 (Lipsiae: Weidmannos, 1853).

²Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Táin bó Cúailgne (nach H. 2. 17)', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 8 (1912). See also Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Die Überlieferung der Táin bó Cúailgne', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 9 (1913); Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Zur Táin bó Cúailgne', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 10 (1915); Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Allerlei Irisches', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 10 (1915); Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Zur keltischen Literatur und Grammatik', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 12 (1918).

³Rudolf Thurneysen, *Handbuch des Alt-irischen: Grammatik, Texte und Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1909).

⁴Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, ed. D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1940 [repr. 1993]), pp. v–vi.

⁵Rudolf Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften u. Litteraturdenkmälern*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, 1912).

⁶Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhímaic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

⁷Sir John Rhŷs, *Lectures on Welsh Philology* (London: Trübner, 1877).

⁸Holger Pedersen, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909–13).

⁹Roland M. Smith, 'The *Senbriathra Fíthail* and Related Texts', *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928).

¹⁰Roland M. Smith, 'Further Light on the *Finnsruth Fíthail*', *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931).

to cross-reference early Irish wisdom texts and included the *Senbríathra Fíthail*, based upon Thurneysen's edition.¹¹ As with Thurneysen's edition, this was revised by Colin Ireland, but Smith's article does contain a section not available in Colin Ireland's edition, which is important for the wisdom figure aspect of Fíthal in early Irish literature and concerns advice on marriage.¹² The last article written by Roland Smith supplies a catalogue of early Irish wisdom literature which includes wisdom texts ascribed to Fíthal, including one written by Geoffry Keating.¹³ The most important contribution by Smith was his identification of the formulaic features of *Finn'sruth Fíthail*, which Liam Breatnach subsequently revised.¹⁴

One of the most prolific of the early scholars was Kuno Meyer.¹⁵ As a Professor at Liverpool University he had ready access to the manuscripts stored by the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) and contributed a staggering amount of transcription and translation work within early Irish literature. In relation to Fíthal, he published one of the two versions of the poetic dialogue featuring Cormac and Fíthal, which, until the critical edition of this thesis, was the primary edition of the text.¹⁶

John Strachan, whose *Old-Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old-Irish Glosses* is still used in the pedagogy of Old Irish,¹⁷ co-edited the first two issues of *Ériu* with Meyer. With Whitley Stokes he published the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, which includes editions of the most important glosses of Old Irish in the Continental Irish manuscripts.¹⁸

More immediately relevant to the present work is the contribution of D. A. Binchy, who was a student of Thurneysen in Bonn prior to World War II. Binchy re-edited and re-published a considerable body of early Irish legal material.¹⁹ His magnum opus, the *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*

¹¹Roland M. Smith, 'The *Senbriathra Fithail* and Related Texts', *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928).

¹²Roland M. Smith, 'Fíthal and Flann Fína', *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930).

¹³Roland Mitchell Smith, 'The *Speculum Principum* in Early Irish Literature', *Speculum* 2 (1927).

¹⁴Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 253–257.

¹⁵Cormac Úa Cuileinnáin, *Sanas Chormaic: An Old-Irish Glossary*, vol. 4, ed. Kuno Meyer (Dublin [repr. Dyfed]: Hodges, Figgis, & Co. [repr. Llanerch Publishers], 1913 [repr. 1994]); *Hibernica Minora*. Being a fragment of an Old-Irish treatise on the Psalter, with translation, notes and glossary, and an Appendix containing extracts hitherto unpublished from MS. Rawlinson, B. 512 in the Bodleian Library. Edited by Kuno Meyer. With a facsimile. *Anecdota Oxoniensia*. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press; Kuno Meyer, ed., *Cáin Adamnáin: an Old-Irish Treatise on the Law of Adamnan*, vol. 12 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).

¹⁶*Hibernica Minora*. Being a fragment of an Old-Irish treatise on the Psalter, with translation, notes and glossary, and an Appendix containing extracts hitherto unpublished from MS. Rawlinson, B. 512 in the Bodleian Library. Edited by Kuno Meyer. With a facsimile. *Anecdota Oxoniensia*. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press.

¹⁷John Strachan, *Old-Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old-Irish Glosses*, ed. Osborn Bergin, 4th edition (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1949 [repr. 1995]).

¹⁸Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus: a collection of Old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose and verse*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901–1903).

¹⁹E. g. D. A. Binchy, 'Bretha Crólige', *Ériu* 12 (1938); D. A. Binchy, 'Sick-Maintenance in Irish Law', *Ériu* 12 (1938); D. A. Binchy, 'Irish Law Tracts Re-Edited', *Ériu* 17 (1955); D. A. Binchy, 'Bretha Nemed', *Ériu* 17 (1955); D. A. Binchy, 'Bretha Déin Chécht', *Ériu* 20 (1966); D. A. Binchy, 'Mellbretha', *Celtica* 3 (1968); D. A. Binchy, 'An Archaic Legal Poem', *Celtica* 9 (1971); D. A. Binchy, 'Distraint in Irish Law', *Celtica* 10 (1973); D. A. Binchy, *Críth Gablach* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979); D. A. Binchy, 'A Text on the Forms of

(CIH), compiles nearly all of the known texts of early Irish law in a diplomatic edition that has become the standard reference text for early Irish legal studies.²⁰ Modern scholarship continues to mine the depths of this particular work. For instance, the early Irish law series, published by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, relies heavily on the CIH as its primary reference. The current trend in scholarly literature is towards detailed studies of named texts utilising CIH for cross-referencing purposes. In addition to the CIH, Binchy also wrote concerning the implications of his research into early Irish law and its antiquity.²¹ His main conclusion in this was the professional nature of the early Irish jurists and the unchanging nature of the early Irish sources for the law.²²

Contemporaneous with those studying Old Irish, other scholars were studying early Modern Irish and Bardic verse, two of whom appear frequently in this thesis: Osborn Bergin and Brian Ó Cuív. Osborn Bergin edited the Irish Grammatical Tracts for publication as addenda to *Ériu*.²³ These tracts supply samples of correct and incorrect word-forms and metrical specimens. Together these tracts constitute the textbooks used by the master-poets to instruct their students in the basics of Irish grammar and poetics. Bergin also collaborated with R. I. Best and M. A. O'Brien to print the entire Book of Leinster in a diplomatic edition, which includes the earliest version of the poetic dialogue featuring Cormac and Fíthal, and which forms the basis for the edition in Chapter 5.²⁴ For the pedagogy of Early Modern Irish, he also produced an edition of the stories from Keating's History of Ireland.²⁵ Brian Ó Cuív's prolific scholarship in Early Modern Irish and Classical verse is much cited and discussed. In terms of Fíthal, two of his publications are of great importance; first is his 'Observations on the Book of Lismore' which is a detailed discussion of the manuscript status of the Book of Lismore, in which the only copy of *Forbhuis Droma Damhghaire* exists.²⁶ The other is the *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries*, in which he describes a new fragment of the poetic dialogue featuring Cormac and Fíthal.²⁷ He was also an editor of the journals *Celtica* and *Éigse*.

Distrain', *Celtica* 10 (1973).

²⁰D. A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, vol. 6 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979).

²¹D. A. Binchy, 'The Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Studia Celtica* 10-11 (1975-76); D. A. Binchy, 'Fair of Tailtiu and the Feast of Tara', *Ériu* 18 (1958).

²²D. A. Binchy, 'Linguistic and Legal Archaisms in the Celtic Law Books', *The Transactions of the Philological Society* (1959) and D. A. Binchy, 'Irish History and Irish Law: I', *Studia Hibernica* 15 (1975)

²³Irish Grammatical Tracts, being a supplement to *Ériu* (1916-29).

²⁴R. I. Best, Osborn Bergin and M. A. O'Brien, eds., *The Book of Leinster : formerly Leabar na Núachongbála*, vol. 6 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954-1983).

²⁵Osborn Bergin, ed., *Stories from Keating's History of Ireland*, 3rd edition (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1930 [repub. 1996]).

²⁶Brian Ó Cuív, 'Observations on the Book of Lismore', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Series C* 83 (1983).

²⁷Brian Ó Cuív, ed., *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001).

Another great scholar of Early Modern Irish and Irish poetry in general whose work impinged on ours was Eleanor Knott. Her edition of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn's poetry is the standard reference text for this Early Modern poet.²⁸ Within her critical edition, she placed an important introduction to the introduction, orthography, and grammar of Early Modern Irish poetry. She also produced a description of Irish Syllabic Poetry from 1200–1600.²⁹ Her editorial work included editing *Ériu* and portions of the *Dictionary of the Irish Language Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials*.³⁰ These labours were in addition to her own articles in various Celtic Studies journals.

Another scholar who also worked in the area of early Irish literature in general and early Irish poetry in particular was Gerard Murphy. His work on the metre and forms of early Irish poetry is even now, while troublesome to obtain, a standard text on the subject.³¹ He was the editor of the journal *Éigse* in conjunction with other various co-editors over the years. In relation to Fíthal, he completed the edition of *Duanaire Finn* for the Irish Texts Society.³² In addition to his notes on the text itself, Murphy's treatment included information that connected the manuscripts and language of the poems which contained Fíthal in *Duanaire Finn*.

1.2 Modern Scholars

The next two scholars of early Irish law whose publications had a significant impact on this thesis were Fergus Kelly and Liam Breatnach, both connected to the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, School of Celtic Studies. Fergus Kelly wrote the standard guide to early Irish law, which is used extensively in this thesis as it provides accurate and precise information concerning topics which appear repeatedly.³³ Kelly has also published editions of the *Audacht Morainn*, which is a wisdom text concerning the mythical judge Morann,³⁴ and a book on early Irish farming techniques which uses early Irish law as its explanatory basis for exploring the reality of farming in early Ireland.³⁵ Liam Breatnach has also written important articles which concern both the operation of early Irish law and its place in early Irish society. The seminal article 'The Laws of the Irish', written with Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Aidan Breen, describes in great detail the use of Latin in the early Irish law tracts and the implications for the vernacular in

²⁸Eleanor Knott, ed., *The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn*, vol. 2 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1922).

²⁹Eleanor Knott, *Irish Syllabic Poetry 1200-1600*, 2nd edition (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957).

³⁰E. G. Quin, ed., *Dictionary of the Irish Language: Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials Compact Edition* (Royal Irish Academy, 1983).

³¹Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1961).

³²Gerard Murphy, ed., *Duanaire Finn*, vol. 3 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1908-1953).

³³Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988).

³⁴Fergus Kelly, *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976).

³⁵Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997).

early Irish law.³⁶ In addition to this article, he has also written articles on church influence on the drafting of early Irish law.³⁷

Robin Stacey has written extensively on early Irish law and its place in early Irish society. Her book *The Road to Judgement: from Custom to Court in Medieval Ireland and Wales* ties together the procedure of early Irish law and the institution of suretyship, which was the main mechanism to enforce contracts in early Ireland.³⁸ She has also published on early Irish law tracts³⁹ and articles on the philosophical basis for early Medieval law.⁴⁰ These have facilitated further understanding of both the primary source basis and philosophical basis for early Irish law and other early non-Roman law systems in Europe.

Neil McLeod, a professor of law, has also written extensively on early Irish law. His book *Early Irish Contract Law* contains an analysis of early Irish contract law and a critical edition of the corpus which concerns the contract in early Irish law, including a few relevant sections from *Finnsruth Fíthail*.⁴¹ He has also written extensively on status and currency in early Irish law and the law of personal injury.⁴² His major philosophical position is that early Irish jurists were using a living tradition of law and that they were well aware of the implications of their work.⁴³ Most of the problems that face us today are due to loss of material and the fact that currency changed over time, which caused glossing in an attempt to revise the law without changing the original material.⁴⁴ McLeod's work on the sources and his legal background brings a needed perspective from historical jurisprudence.

In the discipline of Historical Geography, Nerys Patterson's *Cattle Lords & Clansmen* uses historical, geographical, and sociological methodologies to explore interesting features of the

³⁶Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, 'The Laws of the Irish', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

³⁷Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

³⁸Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: From Court to Custom in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

³⁹Robin Stacey, 'Translation of the Old Irish tract *Berrad Airechta*', in Charles-Edwards et al., *Lawyers and Laymen: Studies in the History of Law Presented to Professor Dafydd Jenkins on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday*.

⁴⁰Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Law and Order in the Very Old West: England and Ireland in the Early Middle Ages', in Benjamin T. Hudson and Vickie Ziegler, eds., *Crossed Paths: Methodological Approaches to the Celtic Aspect of the European Middle Ages* (London: University Press of America, 1991); Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: From Court to Custom in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Instructional Riddles in Welsh Law', in Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005); Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Law and Memory in Early Medieval Ireland', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004); Robin Stacey, 'Speaking in Riddles', in Próinséas Ní Chatháin, ed., *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

⁴¹Neil McLeod, *Early Irish Contract Law* (Sydney: Centre for Celtic Studies, 1992).

⁴²Neil McLeod, 'Assault and Attempted Murder in Brehon Law', *Irish Jurist* 33 (1998).

⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 351–353.

⁴⁴Neil McLeod, 'Interpreting Early Irish Law: Status and Currency, Part I', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 41 (1986) and Neil McLeod, 'Interpreting Early Irish Law: Status and Currency, Part II', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 42 (1987).

early Irish proto-state.⁴⁵ Her other work includes two articles which touch upon the vexed question of the validity of early Irish law. The first is a direct examination of the problem, to which she adds that by the time of independent English records, the law was at least referred to by native Gaelic lords.⁴⁶ The second article only refers indirectly to the question by looking at the later textual history of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*.⁴⁷ Her conclusion is that the later legal families were attempting to change the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to make the argument that native Irish law was not barbaric, as was argued by English commentators at the time. Her sociological perspective on early Irish society is an essential contribution to our understanding of the development and reasons behind early Irish law.

Thomas Charles-Edwards has written extensively on early Christian Ireland. In his book of the same name, *Early Christian Ireland*, he engages in a deep discussion of the history of early Ireland from the conversion to the ninth century.⁴⁸ He has also worked in the field of early Irish law, having edited *Bechbretha* with Fergus Kelly for the early Irish law series.⁴⁹ He has also written extensively on early Irish and Welsh kinship patterns, making one of the major contributions (from the perspective of early Irish law) to our understanding of the structure and status of the early Irish family.⁵⁰ Charles-Edwards has commented upon most aspects of early Irish studies, and has contributed remarkably to them.

The computus controversy of the early Medieval period, in which the Irish played a large role, has fascinated scholars for over a century. The mathematical and theological sophistication of the Irish participants has been the basis for claims about the early Irish educational experience.⁵¹ Among contemporary scholars, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has made numerous discoveries and extensive contributions to the theological and mathematical basis of the controversy and the Irish response both at home and on the Continent.⁵² Ó Cróinín has also written more widely about early Irish history, and his *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* has significantly increased knowledge about this field.⁵³

The question of St Patrick has consumed scholarly time and effort for much of the twentieth century and before. A large portion of the material concerning Patrick has been shown to be later hagiography. The only surviving material that was written by Patrick himself was his *Confessio*

⁴⁵Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994).

⁴⁶Nerys Patterson, 'Brehon Law in Late Medieval Ireland: "Antiquarian and Obsolete" or "Traditional and Functional"?', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 17 (1989).

⁴⁷Nerys Patterson, 'Gaelic Law and the Tudor Conquest of Ireland: The Social Background of the Sixteenth-Century Recensions of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Irish Historical Studies* 27 (1991).

⁴⁸T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴⁹T. M. Charles-Edwards and Fergus Kelly, eds., *Bechbretha* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983).

⁵⁰T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

⁵¹Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995).

and his letter to a British warlord who had violated the rights of a group of his followers.⁵⁴ David Dumville has both written on St Patrick and edited a volume on the subject. His work has also touched upon several subjects in a British context including the dating of medieval origins both Irish and Anglo-Saxon.⁵⁵ He has voiced powerful opinions on many of the major cruces facing modern scholarship in regard to medieval history and studies.

Work in historical linguistics in Irish continues, and one of the major scholars in this field is Kim McCone. He has advanced the understanding of early Irish and its pre-history in Proto-Celtic and beyond, most significantly in his analysis of the early Irish verb.⁵⁶ From this perspective and using his knowledge of early Irish literature and language, he has commented widely on the status and nature of the literature of early Ireland.⁵⁷ He has also fostered other scholars through publishing and editing the Maynooth Monograph series and the Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts series.⁵⁸

In Ancient Celtic Studies and Archaeology, Miranda Green has written in support of the concept of a continuity of Celtic society from ancient to medieval times. Her *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*⁵⁹ connects well with Fergus Kelly's *Early Irish Farming*.⁶⁰ She has also contributed to debate about the continuity of Celtic society more generally⁶¹ and discussed archaeological evidence in conjunction with sacral kingship.⁶² Her work seeks to bridge the gap between the archaeological evidence and the literature of early Ireland and Wales.⁶³

⁵⁴Ludwig Bieler, ed., *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi*, vol. 2 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1952).

⁵⁵David N. Dumville, 'Félire Óengusso: Problems of Dating a Monument of Old Irish', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002); Pádraig P. Ó Néill and David N. Dumville, eds., *Cáin Adomnáin and Canones Adomnani* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, 2003); David Dumville, 'Language, Literature, and Law in Medieval Ireland: Questions of Transmission', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 9 (1985); David N. Dumville, 'Mael Brigte mac Tornáin, pluralist coarb (†927)', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004); David N. Dumville, 'The World of the Síd and the Attitude of the Narrator in *Táin Bó Fraích*', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 7 (1995).

⁵⁶Kim McCone, *The Early Irish Verb*, 2nd edition (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1997).

⁵⁷See especially Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990).

⁵⁸Kim McCone, ed., *Echtrae Chonnlaí and the Beginnings of Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, and Bibliography and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: Kim McCone, 2000); Kaarina Hollo, *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait and its Place in the Irish Literary and Oral Narrative Traditions: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, Translation, Bibliography and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005); Kim McCone, *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader: Including an Introduction to Middle Irish* (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005); Caoimhín Ó Dónaill, ed., *Talland Éitair: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Textual Notes, Bibliography, and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005).

⁵⁹Miranda Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁶⁰Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997).

⁶¹Miranda J. Aldhouse-Green, *Pagan Celtic Religion and Early Celtic Myth: Connections or Coincidence?*, in Ronald Black, William Gillies and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999).

⁶²Miranda Aldhouse-Green, 'Pagan Celtic Iconography and the Concept of Sacral Kingship', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 52 (2001).

⁶³Miranda Green, *The Gods of the Celts* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1993); Miranda Green, ed., *The Celtic*

1.3 Theoretical Scholars

The theory and theoretical connections of early Irish literature have been a topic of debate within the field for over a century. Few authors make theoretics a main focus of their work within Celtic Studies, but they have contributed to the understanding of early Irish literature. One of the most important theoreticians was Georges Dumézil who, while not a specialist in early Ireland, has influenced the debate of specialists in the field. Over the course of his career, Dumézil built a theory about the origins of the differing mythologies of the daughter languages of proto-Indo-European using a similar comparative method to that which was used to reconstruct the linguistic connections of the Indo-European languages.⁶⁴ His work built upon that of Emile Benveniste, who used a ‘sociological’ method to reconstruct the features of the Indo-European thought-world.⁶⁵ His theories have inspired other scholars to use and, in some cases, modify them. These scholars publish in places like the *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, but provide Irish scholars with an interesting point of view on the Irish material which they use as evidence in their Indo-European oriented theories. Among these later scholars, Emily Lyle⁶⁶ and William Sayers⁶⁷ provide analysis from an Irish perspective. In the same way, Kim McCone has also commented with respect to the age-grading aspects of Indo-European culture.⁶⁸ In a broader and more inclusive sense, Calvert Watkins in his *How to Kill a Dragon* has attempted to use the comparative method to re-create the form of Indo-European poetics. He has identified the form ‘HERO KILLS DRAGON/SERPENT’ as the basic poetic form of Indo-European poets.⁶⁹

Dumézil’s theory is not without its critics, but the lack of comparative scholarly attention to his theories says more about the way in which they were received. His methods were roundly dismissed by H. J. Rose as a means of explaining early Roman and Greek religion.⁷⁰ Wouter

World (London: Routledge, 1995); Miranda Green, *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors, Virgins, Mothers* (London: British Museum Press, 1995); Miranda Green, *Exploring the World of the Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997).

⁶⁴ Georges Dumézil, *The Destiny of a King*, ed. Alf Hiltebeitel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

⁶⁵ C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 50–52.

⁶⁶ E. g. Emily Lyle, ‘Broadening the Perspective on Dumézil’s Three Functions’, in Edgar C. Polomé, ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996).

⁶⁷ E. g. William Sayers, ‘Tripartition in Early Ireland: Cosmic or Social Structure?’, in Edgar C. Polomé, ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996); William Sayers, ‘Fergus and the Cosmogonic Sword’, *History of Religions* 25 (1985); William Sayers, ‘Portraits of the Ruler: Óláfr Páir Hoskuldsson and Cormac Mac Airt’, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 17 (1989); William Sayers, ‘Textual notes on Descriptions of the Old Irish Chariot and Team’, *Studia Celtica Japonica* 4 (1991); William Sayers, ‘Róimíd Ríógínmit, Royal Fool: Onomastics and Cultural Valence’, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 33 (2005).

⁶⁸ Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 209–211.

⁶⁹ Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁷⁰ H. J. Rose, ‘Review of Georges Dumézil, *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus and Servius et la Fortune*’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947); H. J. Rose, ‘Review of Georges Dumézil, *Rituels indo-européens à Rome*’, *Classical Review* 69 (1955); H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1959).

W. Belier in his *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"*, while sensitive to his subject, does not agree with the basic premises of the theory.⁷¹ John Brough attempted to use the Bible to prove that Dumézil's theory could be applied universally and hence it could not be used as an explanatory basis for the development of Indo-European mythology.⁷² However, the most eloquent critique of Dumézil's theory is the silence of subsequent scholars.⁷³

Dumézil's is not the only theory proposed to explain aspects of early Irish literature in mythological terms. An attempt was made by M.-L. Sjoestedt to account for the Tuatha Dé Danann in early Irish literature by reference to earlier divine characteristics.⁷⁴ Her work reacted to the work of early folklorists who followed James Frazer's influential work *Golden Bough*.⁷⁵ These treatments of myth tend to attempt to explain all myth at once and tend to dismiss awkward details. Overgeneralising was one of the excesses of early twentieth century scholarship. In the more specialist field of early Irish studies, T. F. O'Rahilly attempted to bring together all aspects of early Irish literature to explain it in terms of repeated mythological patterns.⁷⁶ However, subsequent scholars have on the whole neglected his explanation. An hypothesis to encompass both Celtic and Germanic evidence was proposed by Hilda Ellis Davidson, in which the king was central to a yearly ritual festival, and a flexible view of the Otherworld and ancestral worship were deemed key to the understanding of the mythology of both peoples.⁷⁷

The historical-comparative approach to early Irish literature is opposed by the 'Eurocentric' point of view. This is not a formal theory with committed main proponents and a cohesive thought structure, but is a perspective that has gained ground in the last part of the twentieth and the first part of the twenty-first centuries. It was a reaction to what has since been dubbed the 'nativist' theory of early Irish literature. One of the first scholars to question the 'nativist' position was James Carney in his *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, in his essay on the analogues and dissemination of the main motif of the early Irish tale *Táin Bó Fraích*.⁷⁸ Other scholars, including Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone have contributed notably to this point of view.⁷⁹ While a comprehensive theoretical statement has not been published for the 'Eurocentric'

⁷¹Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991).

⁷²John Brough, 'The Tripartite Ideology of the Indo-Europeans: an Experiment in Method', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 22 (1959).

⁷³Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), pp. 15–16.

⁷⁴M.-L. Sjoestedt, *Gods and Heroes of the Celts*, ed. M. Dillon (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994).

⁷⁵James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: a Study in Comparative Religion* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890).

⁷⁶T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946).

⁷⁷Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁷⁸James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955).

⁷⁹Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984) and Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early*

point of view, it explains early Irish literature synchronically as opposed to ‘genetically’ through the powerful, pervasive and continuing contacts between Europe and Ireland.

1.4 Archaeological and Anthropological Scholars

A modern debate of interest to our enquiry focuses upon Ireland as such, and also on the connotations of the terms ‘Celt’ and ‘Celtic’. This debate was begun in two disciplines, Anthropology and Archaeology, and stems from new thinking about the status and creation of ethnic identity. In general, these scholars reject the notion of a ‘Celtic’ identity and argue that the peoples of Northern Europe in ancient times whom we have traditionally called ‘Celts’ did not think of themselves as one cohesive group, but rather in terms of their tribal affiliation.⁸⁰

In archaeology, two synoptic works may be used to represent this position. The first of these is *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* by Simon James.⁸¹ He uses recent interpretations in Archaeology and Anthropology to cast doubt upon the traditional wave theory of Celtic expansion across ancient Europe and upon the earlier archaeological theorising which supported this interpretation.⁸² One weakness of his work, however, is his treatment of historical linguistics, which he deals with in only two paragraphs and a few references to other scholars, rather than substantively engaging with the linguistic audience which contradicts his argument.⁸³ John Collis’s *The Celts: Origins, Myths, and Inventions* has the same thrust as James’s work, but instead of using archaeological theory to attack the notion of the ‘Celts’, he uses historiographical and political information from the late seventeenth century to the early twentieth century to build an argument concerning the fabrication of the ‘Celts’. He suggests that the major misconceptions which still obstruct Celtic Studies are debris from Nation-State formation in the Early Modern period in Europe, and the Irish Nationalism of the early twentieth century.⁸⁴ Like James, he criticises the linguist’s wave theory as incompatible with the findings of European archaeology.⁸⁵

The archaeological criticisms rest on new interpretation of the evidence. In earlier archaeological theory, changes in the technology of the artifacts (e. g. as found in graves) were presumed to be evidence of a new wave of invaders into an area. Thus, technology and society were intimately linked and intertwined. The role of trade was suppressed in this vision of prehistory. In more recent years, this picture has been supplanted by the idea that trade is one

Irish Literature (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990).

⁸⁰ Although, if Caesar is to be believed, the peoples of Gaul met once a year in common congress. If this is true, did they not have a kind of connection?

⁸¹ Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1999).

⁸² Ibid., pp. 26–42.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 81–83.

⁸⁴ John Collis, *The Celts: Origins, Myths, and Inventions* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003).

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 45–56.

of the most important features in evidence in grave sites.⁸⁶ Thus, technological innovations, especially in terms of pottery, which is the most readily identifiable and easily dated category of material, were more likely to have been traded into and out of areas. This helpfully complicates the over-simple earlier pictures, and the direction of trade has become more important. These innovations in archaeological theory have not, however, provided an historically satisfying picture of the people who occupied Northern Europe in the ancient past. The identification of the people or peoples of Northern Europe must still start from the written testimony of the ancient Greeks and Romans.⁸⁷ These sources, of course, are biased and, in most cases, critical of the non-Mediterranean peoples.⁸⁸ The Greek ethnographers, especially, would copy from each other instead of collecting primary source material, or would uncritically accept outlandish tales of sailors and other travellers in Mediterranean ports, which gives a self-referential tinge to their commentary on non-Mediterranean peoples.⁸⁹ We are not helped by the widely varying names which the ancient commentators used to refer to the peoples of Northern Europe. These problems have caused some modern commentators to conclude that attempts to reconstruct the ethnology of pre-Roman Northern Europe are doomed and ill-conceived.⁹⁰ It is true that the meagre and conflicting evidence and the pervasive bias in the written sources, make it hard to create a hard-edged picture of the peoples of Northern Europe in ancient times.

As regards anthropological approaches to ‘Celticity’, two journal articles are of particular interest. In her article, ‘Celtic Ethnic Kinship and the Problem of Being English’, Maryon McDonald draws on her experiences in Brittany where she engaged with Celtic scholars there while learning the Breton language.⁹¹ Her observations are critical of the state of affairs in Celtic Studies at the time. In particular, she criticises the way that historical linguistics had been used to create the ‘illusion’ that there was a homogeneous group of people who spoke a language called ‘Celtic’, and that shared use of such a language would imply a homogeneous culture. This, in her estimation, constituted a vain search for ethnic purity which does not exist. From a more pan-European point of view, Michael Dietler, in his article “‘Our Ancestors the Gauls’: Archaeology, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Manipulation of Celtic Identity in Modern Europe”, traces the use of the linguistic term ‘Celtic’ in the post-revolutionary era in France.⁹²

⁸⁶John Collis, *The Celts: Origins, Myths, and Inventions* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003), pp. 133–160.

⁸⁷J. H. C. Williams, *Beyond The Rubicon: Romans and Gauls in Republican Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁸⁸John Collis, *The Celts: Origins, Myths, and Inventions* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003), pp. 13–26.

⁸⁹J. H. C. Williams, *Beyond The Rubicon: Romans and Gauls in Republican Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 68–100.

⁹⁰Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1999), p. 136–7.

⁹¹Maryon McDonald, ‘Celtic Ethnic Kinship and the Problem of Being English’, *Current Anthropology* 27 (1986), pp. 333–347.

⁹²Michael Dietler, “‘Our Ancestors the Gauls’: Archaeology, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Manipulation of Celtic Identity in Modern Europe”, *American Anthropologist* 96 (1994), pp. 584–605.

He demonstrates the development of the idea of the French nation as a direct descendant of the Gaulish tribes prior to Caesar's conquest, and shows how this was then used to create a new kind of nationalism, and how this gave rise to the view of France as a 'Celtic' nation. He also discusses the use of the term 'Celt' and 'Celtic' by politicians in the formation of the European Union, and shows how they were as a rhetorical device in debates about the 'historical' basis of the European Union.

A current anthropological theory states that ethnic identity is not a normal constituent of human culture. According to this theory, ethnic identity is generated by a force outwith the community. This 'Other' is the catalyst which consolidates feeling within the community and creates a sense of shared identity. Without this 'Other', there is no need to consolidate a community with an ethnonym or other means of shared ethnicity.⁹³ As applied to ancient Gaul, this theory would assume that the names for peoples or tribes arose in the context of increasing competition for resources both material and economic. This theory tends to depend upon a view of pre-Roman Gaulish social reality as a scattering of nuclear farms with no large-scale structuring.⁹⁴ But for these farms to continue in operation, they must have had contact with other farms and larger settlements. On this view, the fundamental social fabric within which all human beings must exist is suppressed. For this social fabric to be effective, there must be at least elements of a shared language, e. g. for the facilitation of trade. While dialectal difference may make this interaction more complicated, the communicative imperatives of trade in the larger settlements would cause a mixing and matching of linguistic forms, and the search for linguistic parity and the primary psychological need for humans to socialise could have enabled a common language to develop. Within this common language, relationships between even the most isolated groups and those in the settlements, and indeed of every person in a given geographical area could have engendered a sense of community if not of shared identity. While outside forces may help to create an ethnic identity, this identity is only possible with a sense of shared life. In other words, a preceding social connection creates the backdrop for the creation of a shared ethnic identity. It may be added that these anthropologically based strictures against the ethnonym 'Celtic' have a real tinge of 'post-colonialism'.⁹⁵

The animadversions on the term 'Celt' and 'Celtic' have not gone without comment by specialist scholars. For example, Barry Cunliffe has lodged a vigorous defence of the traditional view of 'Celtic' continuity from pre-Classical to modern times.⁹⁶ While Cunliffe sees the continuity as organic and obvious, Sims-Williams gives a more nuanced view of the developments in

⁹³ Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1999), pp. 67–85.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 77–81.

⁹⁵ Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 36 (1998), pp. 1–35.

⁹⁶ B. W. Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

the linkage of ethnography and linguistics.⁹⁷ The current inter-disciplinary debate shows that the recent archaeological hegemony is now disrupted.

The debate about the validity of ‘Celtic’ is of great importance because of its public nature. Its proponents have, to an unusual degree, attempted to present their views to the general public. These views have spilled over into the hinterland of ‘coffee table’, ‘New Age’ books, and television documentaries about the ‘Celts’. While improving knowledge and rooting out misconceptions is of vital importance within the discipline of Celtic Studies, the participants who ‘go public’ need to avoid dogmatic simplifications. They must not forget that the question is still open and that differing views on the validity of the word ‘Celt’ and ‘Celtic’ have a political dimension that has real-world consequences, to a greater extent than ‘German’ and ‘Germanic’ or ‘Scandinavian’.

1.5 Biblical Wisdom Scholars

With the increasing consensus that early Ireland was influenced by current trends in continental Europe, both in pre-historic and historic times, the relevance of Biblical Studies to the study of early Irish literary sources has become more apparent. The early Irish scholars had an affection for the Old Testament, and arguments both in canon law and secular law in early Ireland cite precedents located in the Old Testament. Modern scholarship on the Old Testament is abundant and wide-ranging; for the purposes of this thesis, only the scholarship that focuses on the Biblical wisdom literature is relevant. In this section the key strands are highlighted; for a more detailed analysis, see Chapter 2.

One of the earlier scholars who treated Biblical wisdom literature as a subject in itself was Gerhard Von Rad, the author of *Wisdom in Israel*.⁹⁸ The subject matter of this book was not only the wisdom contained in Hebrew wisdom literature, but also the attitudes of those who wrote it. The thesis of the work is that those who wrote the wisdom literature were not necessarily members of the priestly system in early Israel, in as much as their concerns about the non-spiritual aspects of life were in conflict with the cultic temple system in Jerusalem. Those who wrote wisdom literature were more interested in the daily lives of those whom they instructed. Von Rad also proposed that these wisdom teachers may have set up schools to teach their particular form of wisdom to students, although there is no outside evidence that these schools ever existed.

Claus Westermann wrote a book on the connections between Israelite wisdom literature and those of surrounding cultures in *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples*.⁹⁹ He takes a different line from Von Rad regarding the wisdom schools of early

⁹⁷Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘Celtomania and Celtoscepticism’, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 36 (1998).

⁹⁸Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972 [repr. 1988]).

⁹⁹Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark,

Israel. While certain commentators attempt to associate these schools with the court of the king of Israel, Westermann, suggests that the wisdom literature of early Israel was a post-exilic compilation of sayings, which actually demonstrates the rural and non-royal character of the wisdom collected. He supports this position with examples of wisdom literature from as far afield as Sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. His analysis powerfully demonstrates the international character of wisdom.

Stuart Weeks in his *Early Israelite Wisdom* critically reviews the theories and evidence surrounding the early wisdom texts of Israel.¹⁰⁰ His conclusions do not follow any one authority. For instance, he views unfavourably the theory that the wisdom texts of the Old Testament were created by a learned scribal order which was attached to the king and court. His view is that the wisdom texts grew in direct contact with the cultures of early Mesopotamia, which is in basic agreement with Westermann.¹⁰¹ This would account for evidence for the direct copying of wisdom literature from Egypt into the wisdom literature of early Israel. Weeks, however, takes issue with Von Rad's conception of a group of people who were in opposition to the cultic temple-based religion. The theological basis for wisdom literature and its connection to the hierarchical structure of early Israel is, to him, real. This reappraisal of the theoretical comments about early Israelite wisdom is a valuable guide to the state of the questions in the study of Old Testament wisdom literature.

A general introduction to the exegesis on early Israelite wisdom literature is Roland Murphy's *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*.¹⁰² Instead of using wisdom literature to demonstrate the conditions of early Israel, Murphy explains the situation of each wisdom text with reference to itself and to other wisdom books in the Bible. He also explains which books of the Bible are considered wisdom literature. At the conclusion of the book, he explains how other scholars have related the wisdom books to other aspects of early Israelite culture.

1.6 Vernacular Medieval Wisdom Literature Scholars

While Biblical wisdom literature is a large and active field of study, the wisdom literature of other cultures, especially those of medieval Europe, has only recently become a field of study. Three of the most important scholars in this area are: Elaine Tuttle Hansen, Carolyne Larrington, and T. A. Shippey, who are scholars of Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic. Their insights, however, are immediately applicable to the Irish context and are used as a model in this thesis.

1995).

¹⁰⁰Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 6–19.

¹⁰²Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996).

One of the first scholars to examine in detail the Anglo-Saxon wisdom material was T. A. Shippey in his *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English*.¹⁰³ He rehabilitated the ‘boring’ and ‘repetitious’ Anglo-Saxon literature which had been dismissed by previous scholars. He also demonstrates how this literature would have interacted with the culture of the Anglo-Saxon period. This work set the stage for the works to follow. Elaine Tuttle Hansen wrote *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry*, which is a complete guide to wisdom aspects of Anglo-Saxon poetry.¹⁰⁴ She traced wisdom literature from ancient Mesopotamia and showed the early Christian influence on Anglo-Saxon wisdom poetry and verse. She also categorises the forms of wisdom poetry and types of wisdom composition. Carolyn Larrington used a similar approach to Hansen for Icelandic wisdom literature, especially the *Havamál*, in *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry*.¹⁰⁵ She also surveys the noted similarities between Anglo-Saxon wisdom tradition and the Icelandic traditions, and demonstrates their shared features and connections.

1.7 Medieval Irish Biblical Studies Scholars

The debate about ‘Celtic Christianity’ is possibly one of the oldest debates still current in and around Celtic Studies. While the heat of earlier decades has died, scholars have been able to shed more light on the theological and spiritual thoughts and beliefs of the early Irish. Unfortunately, ‘Celtic Christianity’ has also been caught in the ‘Celtic’ trap which has stymied scholarship and trivialised the profound and motivating beliefs of the early Irish monks, scholars, missionaries, and those whom they converted. While the popular press continues to produce highly suspect books on the subject, scholars have continued to work towards understanding the early Irish Church and its theological underpinnings.¹⁰⁶

One of the most influential modern scholars of early Irish Christianity was Kathleen Hughes whose book, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, initiated the most recent phase of discussion and research concerning the structure of the Irish Church and its role in early Irish society.¹⁰⁷ In her view, the early Irish Church was separated from the Continental Church in both liturgy and theology, in which the fault-line separating the ‘Roman’ party who wanted to restore normal relations with the rest of Christendom, and the ‘Irish’ party who wanted to continue the traditions as they were in Ireland was the calculation of the date of Easter. This debate was resolved at the

¹⁰³T. A. Shippey, *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1976).

¹⁰⁴Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

¹⁰⁵Carolyn Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁶Donald E. Meek, *The Quest for Celtic Christianity* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 2000) and Ian Bradley, *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁷Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London: Methuen, 1966).

synod of Whitby. However, prior to this, the structure of the early Irish Church was unique in Western Europe. In this structure, bishops, priests, and their jurisdictions were less important than abbots and monasteries. In these monasteries, the abbot and his *familia* were the true focus. This arrangement was compared favourably with the Eastern Roman Empire and with the ‘desert fathers’, who renounced worldly possessions to find Christ in the desert. In addition to this, the monastic *familiae* were the main organising aspect of the early Irish Church. Because Church leaders tended to be well-born, the competition for monastic settlements and followers involved dynastic connections and could become entangled with dynastic struggles in later Medieval Ireland.

This particularist view of the early Irish Church was the standard by which all other theories of the early Irish Church were measured. However, as scholarship developed, voices of criticism began to enter the discourse. The most important of these was Richard Sharpe in two articles which struck at the heart of the prevailing theory.¹⁰⁸ In these articles, Sharpe emphasises the worldly nature of the early Irish monastic system and the diocesan structure still visible in the evidence. A more recent review of both the theory and textual basis for the early Irish Church was completed by Colmán Etchingham.¹⁰⁹ In this work, Etchingham critically examines the legal basis, both Latin and vernacular, for the organisation of the early Irish Church. He comes to the conclusion that the criticisms of the earlier understanding of the early Irish Church were justified and a re-evaluation is in order.¹¹⁰ These new critiques and theories fall short of full scholarly consensus, and the debate about the organisation of the early Irish Church is continuing.

Early Irish theology has also engaged the interests of scholars. Prior to World War II, this interest was mostly due to the competing claims of Protestant and Catholic writers as to the origins of ‘Celtic Christianity’. Since then, objective scholarship about the nature of early Irish Christianity has become more prevalent. The orthodox nature of the Catholicism of the early Irish Church has been established, and scholarship now emphasises the common features of the Irish Church and the Church of Rome. A major work in this field is Thomas O’Loughlin’s *Celtic Theology*, which is a detailed analysis of the theology of the Irish Church.¹¹¹ Others have also commented on concerning the theology of the Irish Church. One of these is Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, who not only clarified the mathematical side of the computus controversy but also

¹⁰⁸Richard Sharpe, ‘Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984), pp. 230–270 and Richard Sharpe, ‘Churches and Communities in Early medieval Ireland: towards a Pastoral Model’, in John Blair and Richard Sharpe, eds., *Pastoral Care before the Parish* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 81–109.

¹⁰⁹Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organization in Ireland A. D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999).

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 455–465.

¹¹¹Thomas O’Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World and God in Early Irish Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2000) and Thomas O’Loughlin, ‘A Celtic Theology’: Some Awkward Questions and Observations’, in Joseph Falaky Nagy, ed., *Identifying the ‘Celtic’* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 49–65.

explained the theological basis for the controversy in his compilation, *Early Irish History and Chronology*.¹¹² Another scholar who has worked in this field is John Carey, who has written several books on the subject including: *King of Mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* and *Single Ray of the Sun: Religious Speculation in Early Ireland*.¹¹³ In his article entitled 'In Tenga Bithnua: From Apocalypse to Homily?'¹¹⁴ Carey has explored *In Tenga Bithnua*, the longest text available in Old Irish, and has shown that the text was produced in parallel with Continental European apocryphal literature. These scholars and others have re-focused scholarship in early Irish theology, with implications for the study of early Irish religious poetry in general.

A mixture of theology and physics underpins Marina Smyth's *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-Century Ireland*.¹¹⁵ In this work, she searches the Latin literature of Irish origin for evidence as to the understanding of science in early Ireland. She discovers that most of the scientific knowledge of the Irish is derived from Late Antique compilations of earlier ancient philosophical writings on the natural sciences, through the intermediary Isidore. This correlates well with scholarly understanding of the sources of Irish knowledge of ancient literature.

1.8 Literary Criticism and Folklore Scholars

While early Irish literature is not a major focus of general literary study today, a few scholars engage in the analysis of early Irish literature in the light of modern literary theory.¹¹⁶ In addition, the energies of most scholars of early Irish literature are absorbed in linking it either to the distant past or to the rest of Europe in the Middle Ages. This preoccupation with linkages has left the evaluation of the literature as literature under-represented.

One of the principal early theories of Irish literature insisted on its essentially oral nature. This particular assumption was espoused by such varied critics of early Irish tradition as Meyer, Thurneysen, and Binchy.¹¹⁷ They viewed early Irish literature as a written record of an ancient oral tradition which reached back into pre-literate pre-history, and connected the early Irish to the Indo-Europeans. As noted earlier, modern scholars prefer to connect the literature to contemporary movements in literature on the European continent.

¹¹²Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).

¹¹³John Carey, *King of mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998) and John Carey, *Single Ray of the Sun: Religious Speculation in Early Ireland* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999).

¹¹⁴John Carey, 'In Tenga Bithnua: From Apocalypse to Homily?', in Thomas O'Loughlin, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999).

¹¹⁵Marina Smyth, *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-Century Ireland* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996).

¹¹⁶For the view that this is not enough, see Maria Tymoczko, 'What Questions Should We Ask in Celtic Studies in the new Millennium', in Joseph Falaky Nagy, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 10–29.

¹¹⁷Joesph Falaky Nagy, 'Orality in Medieval Irish Narrative: An Overview', *Oral Tradition* 1/2 (1986), pp. 257–280.

One of the foremost scholars in this particular field is Joseph Falaky Nagy. In his first book, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw*, he surveys the boyhood deeds of Finn mac Cumail. ¹¹⁸ His conclusion is that Finn is the liminal figure *par excellence* in early Irish literature. This view has become standard among critics and analysts of the Fenian tradition and its analysis. In his second book, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients*, he analyses the interaction between Patrick and Colum Cille, and the earlier Irish tradition. He concludes in this work that the authors of early Irish literature used these early Irish saints to give authority to the literature set in the period before the conversion to Christianity. This validation allowed the earlier tradition to have a place in a Christian world and allowed the poets to continue to celebrate it. ¹¹⁹

Literary theorising about early Irish texts has also focused upon the role of women, particularly, in relation to the epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and its characterisation of Medb. An interesting though erroneous belief in the independence of early Irish women has emerged in response to the more active female protagonists in early Irish literature. ¹²⁰

In terms of the non-native contacts of early Irish literature, the international qualities of certain categories of folklore have been adduced in discussions of early Irish and later traditional Irish literature. One of the scholars who attempted to use the methods of folklore in dealing with early Irish literature was James Carney in his examination of the text sharing material with the Irish tale, *Táin Bó Fraích*. ¹²¹ While his findings were challenged, most recently by Dewi Wyn Evans, ¹²² the connections between early and later Modern Irish literature and folklore remains a focus of study. In this context, Alan Bruford has made large contributions, e. g. in terms of the Fenian material, which became more popular in Scotland than in its native Ireland. ¹²³

In the general literature of world folklore, the collection and categorisation of the motifs and tale-types continues to generate scholarly activity, which tends to radiate out from the standard works compiled by Stith Thompson, i. e. *Motif-index of Folk-Literature*, ¹²⁴ and the revision of Antti Aarne's *The Types of the Folktale: a Classification and Bibliography*. Thompson's

¹¹⁸Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).

¹¹⁹Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997).

¹²⁰David Gabriel, 'The Power of Women over the Man in Medieval Irish Prose Tales', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 7 (1995).

¹²¹James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955).

¹²²Dewi Wyn Evans, 'The Learned Borrowings Claimed for *Táin Bó Fraích*', in Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002) and Donald E. Meek, 'Táin Bó Fraích and Other 'Fráech' Texts: a Study in Thematic Relationships Part I', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 7 (1984) and Donald E. Meek, 'Táin Bó Fraích and Other 'Fráech' Texts: a Study in Thematic Relationships Part II', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 8 (1984).

¹²³See Alan Bruford, 'Folktales and Romances', *Béalodeas* 34 (1966) and Alan Bruford, 'Oral and Literary Fenian Tales', *Béalodeas* 54/55 (1986/7).

¹²⁴Stith Thompson, *Motif-index of Folk-literature: a Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-books and Local Legends*, vol. 6, Revised and Enlarged edition (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1955–1958).

Motif-index included Irish examples but it was T. P. Cross who used Thompson's systems to publish *Motif-index of Early Irish Literature*.¹²⁵

1.9 Early Irish History Scholars

In general, the early Irish historical record does not provide us with theory-backed historiography in the manner of Rome or Greece. Scholars interested in the early history of Ireland face a serious deficit in 'pure' historical writing about events within the culture. We have annals, of course; but the earliest ones were extremely terse lists of events for each calendar year, e. g. battles, deaths of important persons, and the succession of kings were deemed important by the annalists. In addition to the annals, scholars can draw on the copiously surviving genealogies which record the lineages of politically important families, and take them back to legendary (and often eponymous) ancestors.¹²⁶ Whereas the genealogies as such mainly give names, they are supplemented in some cases by prose legends which recount the origin legends of the differing dynasties.

The problems of extracting early Irish history from this welter of fact, legend, and fiction have engaged scholars over the years. One of the most interesting approaches is Nerys Patterson's *Cattle Lords & Clansmen*, which attempts to use legal texts and sociological methods to recover the historical circumstances which underlie Irish historical development.¹²⁷ Fergus Kelly's *Early Irish Farming* shows the historical circumstances of the early Irish agriculturalist as reflected in the law tracts.¹²⁸ Bart Jaski's *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* attempts to demonstrate, by using the evidence of legends, laws, and annals together, how kings were chosen in early Ireland.¹²⁹ Synthesis of the history of early Ireland was an impressive work by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín in his *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200*.¹³⁰

The later Middle Ages of Gaelic Ireland have suffered from a lack of attention. A pioneering synthesis was K. W. Nicholls's *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages*, which covers Gaelic Ireland's history from the Norman invasion until the sixteenth century.¹³¹ Another was

¹²⁵Tom Peete Cross, *Motif-index of Early Irish Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1952).

¹²⁶Pádraig Ó Riain, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985); M. A. O'Brien, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976). For analysis, see Máirí Ní Dhonnchadha, 'The Guarantor List of Cáin Adomnán, 697', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 1 (1982), pp. 178–215; David E. Thornton, 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy in Early Medieval Ireland and Wales', in Huw Pryce, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 83–98; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past: The Early Irish Genealogical Tradition', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 12 (1998), p. 177–208.

¹²⁷Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 36–61.

¹²⁸Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997).

¹²⁹Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

¹³⁰Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995).

¹³¹K. W. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003).

Kathrine Simm's *From Kings to Warlords*.¹³² One other recent historical analysis of the High Middle Ages in Ireland may be mentioned: Diana Hall's *Women and the Church in Medieval Ireland, c. 1140-1540*, which uses various written sources to track the development of nunneries in Ireland.¹³³ However, one criticism of this book is that it relies exclusively on Anglo-Norman establishments, and only refers tangentially to Gaelic Irish female ecclesiastical settlements.

1.10 Secondary Sources for Fíthal

For the purposes of this Chapter, the focus so far has been on integrative studies rather than those likely to refer directly to Fíthal. A few modern scholars have discussed Fíthal specifically in their work. For example, Sharon Arbuthnot's 'Fíthal in *Cóir Anmann*' analysed one of Fíthal's lineages, which appears in full in a manuscript in Scotland, whereas it was only a marginal note in the Irish original of that MS.¹³⁴ Arbuthnot has also traced the manuscript history of these two manuscripts of *Cóir Anmann*.¹³⁵ However, she does not discuss in either article the character of Fíthal, or his place within early Irish literature.

Both Fergus Kelly and Liam Breatnach refer to Fíthal within their treatments of the sources for early Irish law. Kelly mentions Fíthal in his *Guide to Early Irish Law* in relation to the *Finnśruth Fíthail*¹³⁶ and the *Senbríathra Fithail*. Liam Breatnach, in his *Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, includes a more thorough discussion of Fíthal as he appears in the laws.¹³⁷ He revises the information provided by Roland Smith and sets the circumstances in which *Finnśruth Fíthail* may have been with in the context of the *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*. Breatnach also places a succinct but very helpful biography of Fíthal in his index.

The most substantial treatment of Fíthal prior to this thesis is Colin Ireland's *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*.¹³⁸ This work centres on a critical edition of a wisdom text from early Ireland. In his book, Colin Ireland argues that the text, while the oldest recension attributes it to Fíthal, was, in fact, a work of a seventh-century Anglo-Saxon aristocrat and monk, who became king of Northumbria on the death of his brothers.¹³⁹ In the introduction of his book, Ireland notes the

¹³²Katharine Simms, *From Kings to Warlords: the Changing Political Structure of Gaelic Ireland in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987).

¹³³Dianne Hall, *Women and the Church in Medieval Ireland, c. 1140-1540* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).

¹³⁴Sharon Arbuthnot, 'Fíthal in *Cóir Anmann*', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 20 (2000), pp. 197–200.

¹³⁵Sharon Arbuthnot, 'The Manuscript Tradition of *Cóir Anmann*', *Studia Celtica* 35 (2001), p. 285–298 and Sharon Arbuthnot, 'Short Cuts to Etymology: Placenames in *Cóir Anmann*', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 79–86.

¹³⁶Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 285.

¹³⁷Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 253–257, 364–365.

¹³⁸Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

¹³⁹Colin Ireland, 'Aldfrith of Northumbria and the Irish Genealogies', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 64–78.

generally passive nature of Fíthal and claims that the only text to give Fíthal a substantial role is *Decision as to Cormac's Sword*.¹⁴⁰ The footnotes in Ireland's introduction, however, provide an invaluable source for texts which contain information about Fíthal, and were invaluable for the preparatory work for our chapters 3 and 4. The *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* itself is a list of three-word maxims or gnomic material.

1.11 Conclusion

Within these various disciplines rests the generation of this thesis. In our attempt to shed light on the manifestations of Fíthal in early Irish law and literature, it became important to look to a wide field of enquiry. The source material for Fíthal is rather scattered, so that the insights from a wide range of scholarly periods and approaches was needed to illuminate the outlines of Fíthal's character. The varied starting points of the generations of scholars who have discussed Fíthal affect the thesis in various subtle ways. Through time scholarly opinion changed as to the status of early Irish texts; the views of Roland Smith, who was ready to accord historicity to the characters of early Irish literature,¹⁴¹ receded into the past. In more modern times, scholars of Celtic Studies have discussed the influence of biblical modes and styles within early Irish literature. But although much has been written in this area, direct engagement with modern biblical exegesis is often lacking. For our purposes, the perspective of biblical scholarship was both appropriate and enabling. In the context of wisdom literature, a few scholars of medieval Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon have used biblical exegesis as a base upon which to build an understanding of the wisdom literature which appears in their field of study. This precedent is useful when looking at Fíthal because of the clear parallels with the wisdom literature of Ireland. While the nature of actual contacts between Anglo-Saxon England and Ireland are still a matter of debate and uncertainty, the style of analysis evolved by some Anglo-Saxon and Norse scholars is directly useful when discussing the character of Fíthal. Literary criticism and analysis have essential roles to play in this thesis. Whereas scholars have dealt mainly with certain genres and characters, the material analysed in this thesis is not much discussed. But if the body of directly relevant scholarship is small, the means and methods evolved to discuss Medb, Finn, and Cormac were generally applicable to the explication of Fíthal. Our net has necessarily been cast wide, and each of the authors who appear in our bibliography has informed this study of Fíthal and helped to establish the boundaries of debate concerning Fíthal and wisdom figures akin to him.

While the above works have influenced the tone and parameters of our discussion, it is notable that almost none focus on Fíthal specifically. Among earlier scholars, only Roland Smith's

¹⁴⁰Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 48–52.

¹⁴¹Roland M. Smith, 'Further Light on the Finnsruth Fíthail', *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931).

work on the *Finn̄sruth Fíthail* contributes substantially. In more modern times, Colin Ireland has used Fíthal in his arguments concerning the authorship and connections of *Senbríathra Fíthail* and *Bríathra Flainn Fína maic Ossu*. A number of scholars most notably Fergus Kelly and Liam Breatnach have references to Fíthal in their works; but Fíthal is in general a peripheral figure. Yet we would argue that there is more to say about wisdom figures in general; the character of Fíthal in particular can add to our understanding in various ways. That is the gap which this thesis seeks to fill.

This literature review has attempted to delineate the background information and concepts that have influenced our thesis. While the thesis is primarily concerned with a single character in an obscure field of study, the information which informed the analysis is taken from a broad range of scholarly endeavours, ranging from those particular to the study of early Irish law to those which inform the contact between the Irish and the rest of Europe, both in the case of Dumézil's theories and the 'Eurocentric' model of contact.

As our study of Fíthal ranges from the earliest stages of Irish writing to eighteenth-century Scotland, this review has aimed to include basic information about the historical and literary background of the main primary texts. As to the secondary literature, only the most important and influential works have been included here. Analyses and discussion will be found grouped around the primary texts in the body of the thesis.

The general lack of secondary literature relevant to Fíthal is in part a consequence of the large amount of early legal material which still awaits translation and analysis. The characters who people the law tracts and give the legal literature its more human qualities are of secondary importance when the main object of study is still in an unsettled scholarly state. There is also a good deal of early literary material awaiting editing, translation, and analysis. As this work continues, early Irish law and early Irish literature will become more amenable to comparison and holistic analysis, from which both will profit.

The next chapters bring the wisdom literature of early Ireland into focus and provides a more detailed study of the specific texts. Its aim will be to bestow a broad understanding of Fíthal's relation to wisdom and the wise in an international and Irish context. This prepares the ground for the two central chapters of the thesis, which explore the fine details of Fíthal's literary career.

Chapter 2

Fíthal and Wisdom Literature in Early Ireland

The previous chapter was a general introduction to the scholarly context of this thesis. This chapter explores the connections between Fíthal, early Irish law, and the international context of wisdom literature in Europe and the Near East. To accomplish this, insights from the field of Old Testament studies and, in particular, the study of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, is combined with analysis of wisdom literature from medieval Europe and medieval Ireland to forge a view of wisdom literature and wisdom figures who represent that literature. The position of Fíthal is then explored within this international context.

The wisdom literature of early Ireland is a topic only tangentially explored by scholars of early Irish.¹ Often, wisdom literature is referred to only in support of arguments that do not take wisdom as their main area of study. Thus, the connections among the various wisdom texts have been only superficially exposed.² The reason for this may be that the material itself does not excite. For instance, the *Tecosca Cormaic* is an almost metrical alliterative list of admonishments for kings punctuated by brief prose questions.³ The wisdom of Flann Fína is a bare list of advice organised by main verb, where each saying is three to four words in length.⁴ This is hardly the stuff of legends, even if spoken by legendary figures such as Cú Chulainn.⁵

If treated correctly, however, the material within these texts supplies a wealth of information about what the literate and learned classes considered sufficiently important to commit to

¹ A list of wisdom texts is available in Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 284–286.

² See Roland M. Smith, ‘The *Senbriathra Fithail* and Related Texts’, *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928), pp. 1–92.

³ Kuno Meyer, *The Instructions of King Cormac Mac Airt*, in Todd Lecture Series, vol. 25 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1909), xi–xii

⁴ Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

⁵ Roland Smith, ‘Bríathartheosc Con Culainn’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 15 (1925), pp. 187–192.

expensive vellum. In certain cases, the material may even provide a dim image of social relations in early Ireland when carefully used in conjunction with early Irish law and early Irish tale literature. The methodology which would enable scholars to interpret the wisdom texts in such a beneficial way is not yet fully developed. This does not, however, preclude a broad sketch of the differing influences which are made manifest in the wisdom literature of early Ireland. The goal of this chapter is to illuminate these connections within the Irish context and the international context of early Medieval Europe, and to place Fíthal more solidly within the wisdom traditions of early Ireland.

The myriad of influences on early Irish wisdom literature need an over-arching metaphor for ease of understanding. While there are a number of metaphors for organisation which would suit the subject matter, for this chapter, the metaphor of threads is used. There are three differing modes or threads of thought which influence early Irish wisdom literature: the Universal, the Biblical/Classical, and the native Irish. These three threads intertwine to form the context within which the wisdom literature of early Ireland and, indeed, all early Irish literature was created. Each thread is explored in turn in this chapter. At the end of the chapter, the threads will be viewed together to create a whole context. Each of these modes represents a thread in the tapestry of early Irish literature, and can be distinguished and analysed in itself. However, early Irish literature is more than the sum of its parts. The texts which constitute early Irish literature seem at times conscious of the presence of the modes and of their differing origins, and at other times unconscious. As for the wisdom literature, it is not at all apparent whether these modes were consciously operative when they were being written. However, as each thread is subjected to further examination, it is hoped that this, among other aspects, will come to light. Our over-arching metaphor is not to be construed as a rigid basis for analysis. As is explained, especially in regard to the Biblical/Classical thread, there are times when any analytical method which is overly rigid will lead to errors in analysis. The creation and manipulation of ambiguity was a skill which early Irish authors mastered and it must be borne in mind that discovering such an author's intention within a text is always fraught with difficulties.

2.1 Universal

Wisdom is the distillation of abstract truths concerning life, which are at times universal observations about human nature and at other times unique insights into the inner workings of a culture or society. Wisdom is articulated in a few standard ways. One method is the gnome: a short and compact statement with instructional import. Another way of imparting wisdom is the nature lyric, which can use scenes from nature to instruct the reader in universal truths. Another way is the riddle, which presents a series of apparently unconnected words or ideas that pose a question for the reader or listener to solve. The dialogue, which may be a question-and-answer

exchanged embodied in a prose or a metrical text, is often between father and son, or at least purports to be. The dialogue itself is usually built around a single point of debate or reference, as in the *Speculum Principis*: a type of dialogue that contains wise instructions about how to manage and rule a kingdom, in the political sense, for a king or prince. This is the only form of wisdom literature which has an explicitly designated audience. The proverb is the most illustrious form of wisdom literature. While it is brief like the gnome, its wisdom is expressed in a more open way. While each of these forms is discussed separately below, they were not rigidly distinguished from one another, but were not distinct from each other and were freely mixed together to create wisdom texts in specific cultures.

While the wisdom sections of the Bible have received much of the attention (see below) in Western scholarship, every culture has own forms of wisdom literature. For example, the most popular form of wisdom literature in ancient Egypt was the instruction style. An early example of this is found in *The Instruction of the Vizier Ptahhotep*, written by the vizier of King Izezi (c. 2450 BC).⁶ In Sumerian and Babylonian civilisations the oldest form of wisdom literature is the proverb, which comes to light c. 1800 BC.⁷ Given that these texts were extant in such early civilisations, and that directly comparable forms and modes are still found among the traditional cultures in Africa, the creation and propagation of wisdom may truly be called an ancient and universal activity of all humankind.⁸

2.1.1 Styles of Universal Wisdom Literature

According to Aristotle, the gnome is a general or universal statement with instructional import that is often short and succinct.⁹ The word *gnomon* itself means ‘knowledge’ and imparts wisdom by promoting knowledge and good judgement on the part of the audience. The gnome is often uttered as a statement of advice or as a commonplace, and is also known as a ‘saw’, i. e. a commonly repeated statement. In ancient Greek literature, such statements were used as a kind of moral poetry and instructional literature, and this genre continued in use in many branches of European literature until the Early Modern period.

The nature lyric may be mistaken for the gnome because of its succinct nature and often obscure meaning. For instance, an Anglo-Saxon nature lyric is translated as ‘frost must freeze, fire consume wood, the earth put forth growth, ice form a bridge’.¹⁰ The cultural context for this saying is now lost, leaving the bare literal meaning, which gives few indications as to its

⁶Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 21–23.

⁷Ibid., pp. 15–16.

⁸Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 6–19.

⁹Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.21.1.

¹⁰Carolyn Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 125.

deeper significance. The main thrust of the nature lyric is to use nature as a metaphor for human life or existence, and to imbue that with universal meaning. The nature lyric often refers to the seemingly unchanging state of nature compared to the ebb and flow of human experience. Like the riddle, explained below, on the surface it makes little sense, but if one is sufficiently knowledgeable about the culture and context of its usage, its meaning should be direct and clear. Unlike the riddle, the nature lyric does not invite the listener to answer a question; it evokes something that is already known by the listener, and by activating this within the context of its utterance places it in a universal context conjured up by the speaker.¹¹

The riddle is one of the most fascinating genres of wisdom literature because it forces the listener or reader to interpret words in new ways to solve it. In most examples, the riddle is a set of utterances that pose a question to the listener. It creates two groups of people: the initiated and the uninitiated. Those who have been initiated into the circle of people who know the answer use it as a way of identifying other initiates.¹² The essence of the riddle lies in the mystery of the answer. Answering the riddle allows the unknower to become, in a way, initiated, their intellectual acumen tested and proved by the mental challenge.¹³ Also, word games and word play were widely used in pre-modern societies as forms of entertainment. In fact, riddles are still used in modern Western society as a form of entertainment, but most of these modern riddles are set purely as mental exercises, and the bulk of practical wisdom has mostly been lost. Lastly, in the early period, the riddle was also seen as a valuable tool of instruction (a usage which is explored more fully below), and was used as a means of teaching students of law in medieval Ireland and Wales.¹⁴

The dialogue is one of the most common literary forms taken by wisdom literature, and was famously exploited by Plato in his Socratic dialogues. Dialogues can be bi-directional, where the wisdom figure is questioned by the student, or uni-directional, where the wisdom figure lectures to the student about wisdom and proper living. There appears to be a difference in style between the Near Eastern traditions, within which wisdom literature is either anonymous (as in the Book of Proverbs), or is identifiable with a real person (as with the Egyptian and Babylonian instructional texts) and the Western tradition where the interlocutors are legendary or semi-legendary persons, as with the dialogue of Solomon and Saturn in the Anglo-Saxon tradition.¹⁵

¹¹See also, Carolyne Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnomie Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 161–173.

¹²Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 126–143.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 131–132.

¹⁴Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Instructional Riddles in Welsh Law', in Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005).

¹⁵Robert J. Menner, *The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1941).

In Europe the proverb is the best known of the various styles of wisdom literature because of the Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament. The proverb sometimes seems to approximate the gnome, though the proverb is, in the main, distinguishable by its overt didactic ‘message’. At other times, a proverb can give rise to an instructional poem or a parable. For instance, Aesop’s Fables are the embodiments of proverbs. Proverbs can become clichés when they lose their instructional impact through over-use.

Scholars have also looked to other forms of literature to find examples of wisdom instruction; examples which have been advanced include the king’s speech to Beowulf in that epic.¹⁶ This scholarly gambit is paralleled in biblical scholarship where, as is shown below, wisdom literature status is accorded to certain ‘wisdom psalms’. These psalms do not form a separate corpus like the Book of Proverbs or Ecclesiastes, but are interspersed among other psalms, from which they are distinguished by their character or sentiment. The identification of wisdom literature embedded within tale or saga literature is hampered because its didactic function is subordinated to the needs of the plot, rather than the needs of the reader. This could be a fruitful area for further research in the context of an Irish literature thesis, but it is not the focus of the present chapter.

Most of the categories of wisdom literature are fairly stable with the exception of the gnome and the nature lyric (see above). Scholars have spent time and effort seeking adequate definitions to differentiate gnome, nature lyrics, and proverbs.¹⁷ This attention to definition is mostly a by-product of Aristotle’s definition of a gnome, and does not advance understanding of wisdom literature as a whole. In practice, gnomes, nature lyrics, and proverbs, when viewed as genres of wisdom literature, are so similar that it is often fruitless to make distinctions which the original authors were clearly not interested in making. Less effort should be expended in defining wisdom literature than in examining its context and merit. For instance, is *Tecosca Cormaic* an instruction, gnomic, or dialogue text? The fact of the matter is that it is all three, and this is a part of the deliberate intention of the author. The fluidity of wisdom literature is part of its strength, and a reason why it has endured through the centuries. A study of the deployment of the various forms and styles found in different wisdom texts would be beneficial, but is beyond the scope of this chapter.

¹⁶Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 55-67. See also Carolyne Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnomic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 9.

¹⁷H. Munro Chadwick and N. Kershaw Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932–1940), pp. 377–403. See also P. L. Henry, *The Early English and Celtic Lyric* (London: Queen’s University, Belfast, 1966), pp. 17–23, Kenneth Jackson, *Early Welsh Gnomic Poems* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1935), pp. 1–3, Kenneth Jackson, *Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), pp. 127–148.

2.1.2 Wisdom Figures

Within wisdom literature, named wisdom figures often appear. They are often, but not always, associated with particular texts. The wisdom figure may be credited with composing the wisdom text, or appear as a character within the text, or stand as a legendary character symbolising the genesis of wisdom for a particular culture or social group. A few examples will help illustrate the point: from the Ancient Greek tradition, Pericles and Solon; from the Hebrew, Solomon; from the Irish, Cormac mac Airt. In certain instances, the wisdom figure is a law-giver or he helps establish social order. While this could be a king, it does not need to be so. For instance, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle came to be seen as wisdom figures. In a Latin context, some kings and early consuls of the Roman Republic were held in high esteem by later generations and could be counted as wisdom figures. In all these respects, Fíthal would fit comfortably as a wisdom figure.

These legendary and semi-legendary figures are found mostly from the Western tradition. By contrast, the wisdom figures from the Near East who were usually either historical persons or completely anonymous. In the case of Solon, an historical person was given legendary features and became a legendary figure to whom sayings adhered. This does not seem to have been the case in the Near East where the authors of wisdom are recorded or they are anonymous. It appears that the only possible exceptions to this rule are the Book of Job and the Book of Wisdom. The Book of Job is an obvious work of fiction, as it records a conversation between God and Satan concerning Satan's ability to make any man curse God.¹⁸ The section of the book of Job most frequently referred to as wisdom literature is the chapter where Job's friends attempt to undermine his steadfast disavowal of sin and his everlasting faith in a just God.¹⁹ The Book of Wisdom, on the other hand, is attributed to King Solomon. However, scholars have determined that it was written later than Solomon's time, possibly in Alexandria; and it is not included in the Hebrew form of the Old Testament. It could possibly have been added by a Greek-speaking Jew who was influenced by the Western form of wisdom literature attribution.²⁰ Outside the wisdom literature tradition, the Song of Songs is also attributed to Solomon. However, the identification hangs on a translation found in the first line of the text; it is unlikely that Solomon composed any text attributed to him.²¹

In the main, it seems that the East-West dichotomy holds.²² The implications of this are not easy to determine. In the Western tradition, the Indo-European inheritance may have left its

¹⁸Job 1:6–12 and 2:1–6.

¹⁹Job 4–27, 32–37.

²⁰Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), pp. 83–86.

²¹Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 41. See also Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), pp. 106–107.

²²Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 10–11.

mark on the disposition of wisdom literature, including a tendency for all traditional wisdom literature to be attributed to legendary personages. In the near-Eastern tradition, the longer time-span through which written records existed, by comparison with the Western tradition, could have allowed a firmer tradition of authorship and a greater degree of textual stability to develop. However, these are mere conjectures.

On a similar note, the wisdom literature of ancient Europe offers a few complexities in regard to authorship. Whereas Western wisdom literature is ascribed to legendary figures, this is not always the case. The most obvious counter example of this is Hesiod's *Works and Days*.²³ While the author of this text is indeed known, the basis of his wisdom is clearly traditional as *Works and Days* includes religious invocations and magical rites in its proscriptions. Rather different in temper are Cicero's, *De Officiis*,²⁴ and, the *Meditations* of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.²⁵ These works spring from philosophical traditions, which have developed the traditional wisdom sources and aim to rationalise them. These kinds of work, while technically a form of wisdom literature, which are not included in this chapter, involve a different mode of thought. Although they are a conscious reworking of traditional wisdom literature, they place wisdom on a rational and theoretical foundation, moving away from the practical didaxis found in wisdom texts.

If humankind has a drive to create order from chaos, wisdom is the distillation of experience into teachable form. Coupled with the equally universal need to create narrative, this has combined to create the wisdom literature genre. Associated with legendary and semi-legendary figures, wisdom literature became a vital and verdant genre in world literature, which manifests itself within the particular experience of every human culture. In these developments, the Irish formulations are hardly alone or unique; simultaneously, however, the particular form and the content of Irish wisdom literature are unique to their particular situation and demonstrate the unique concerns and pre-occupations of Irish society.

2.1.3 Wisdom and The Law

Before turning to the threads of wisdom found in early Irish literature, the relationship between wisdom and the law in early societies needs to be explored. The law in early societies was not simply a man-made set of conventions defining criminal activity, as in the modern interpretation, but the sum of the traditional values and mores of the community, the adhesive which bound the community together and underpinned the entire social fabric. Within such societies, the law was expected to promote social cohesion, even if this meant inequity in the treatment of individuals. Whereas wisdom was the product of long years of communal experience, lovingly articulated by respected senior figures in society, the law expressed with binding force the norms

²³Hesiod, *Theogony. Works and Days. Testimonial*, ed. and trans. by Glenn W. Most (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

²⁴Cicero, *On Duties*, ed. and trans. by Walter Miller (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913 [repr. 2006]).

²⁵Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, ed. and trans. by C. R. Haines, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

of the community. In practice, the cultivation of the laws was entrusted to lawmen and judges. The just adjudication of the judge was paramount to the cohesion of the community. False judgement endangered all sections of society from the lowest to the highest. For this reason, law and wisdom, while not synonymous, were functionally related among early societies.

This can be seen most readily in the religious laws of early Israel. A section of these laws contained in the Book of Leviticus defines whether a certain food preparation technique is Kosher or not. Cleanliness and other public health standards within the Jewish community were the concerns of these laws, and one can see the practical implications of this code of law on the health of the people practising it. In the Islamic world, Halal stems from similar considerations. The interpretation accepted here is based on an idea formulated by Mary Douglas and others, and is clearly appropriate for the argument set out in this chapter.²⁶ These religious laws of Semitic-speaking peoples show how law can be created out of the experience of the people and codified over time. In Western cultures, religious law and secular law seem to have become separated before the historical period. There was an attempt to reintegrate them after the triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire. This was not entirely successful; for while the Emperor became the head of the Church in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, in the Western half, he did not, and the title *Pontifex Maximus* was given to the leader of the Church. But while those who inherited the Western Roman Empire continued to pass laws in a tradition that stretched back to the laws of Ancient Rome,²⁷ the effect of conversion for the Irish was more profound than elsewhere in Europe since it entailed the reconfiguration of the traditional social order to accommodate the Christian Church.

Fíthal fits neatly within this universal context. From the earliest literature attributed to him or featuring him, he is a pre-eminent judge in the imagined court of the legendary Cormac mac Airt, which explains why he appears as a person of high importance in the later literature of Ireland. Later, he acquired poetic attributes to add to his legal status, which is not surprising given that these functions were close in history, in mythology, and literature. Even later, he acquired a historical status, which complemented his image as a wisdom figure. In reality, Fíthal was a legendary figure, at first confined to the legal texts as a legendary judge and lawman on a par with Caratnia, but over time he gained all the attributes of a wisdom figure.

²⁶Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966 [repub. 2002]) and Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

²⁷P. S. Barnwell, 'Emperors, Jurists, and Kings: Law and Custom in the Late Roman and Early Medieval West', *Past and Present* 168 (2000).

2.2 Biblical/Classical

Traditionally, the term ‘wisdom literature’ has been reserved for those books of the Old Testament of the Bible which concern themselves directly with the cultivation of wisdom. These include the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus.²⁸ Some scholars also include the books of Job, Song of Songs, and a few of the Psalms, which we have referred to as the ‘wisdom psalms’.²⁹ Recently, this term has been expanded to include literature from other cultures. Elaine Tuttle Hansen uses the term to describe certain Anglo-Saxon texts,³⁰ and Carolynne Larrington uses it for Icelandic wisdom poetry.³¹ Irish wisdom literature, in comparison with the Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon, survives in greater volume, and forms a widely recurrent element in early Irish literature. Wisdom literature survived in Ireland for longer than it did in some other cultures, and established itself in other genres of literature, e. g. in bardic verse, where it enabled poets to flatter their patron and simultaneously to present themselves as the heirs of Morann and Fíthal. However, the mainspring of the wisdom tradition was the legal tradition rather than the poetic tradition, as is demonstrated anon.

The Biblical and Classical traditions had long roots in the Irish context. With the introduction of Christianity in the fifth century, a new system of belief entered Ireland perforce. Previously, Christian ideas may have entered Ireland through trading and plundering contacts with the Christian faith in the British Isles and possibly even farther afield.³² In this way, writing, in the form of the Ogam script, was introduced to Ireland about the fourth century.³³ From the available scant evidence, the process of acculturation was slow during this period.³⁴ While most Irishmen would doubtless have been only minimally aware of the rich and complex literature of the Roman Empire, a few notable individuals may have had special opportunities to experience it. Once Christianity was introduced, there was a need to import the texts and trappings of the new religion on a much greater scale. Many were sent to the continent to learn the new faith and the *peregrinus* ‘pilgrim-in-exile’ became the ‘ideal’ for those new Christians residing in Ireland.³⁵ As these lines of communication were opened and expanded, monks and scribes

²⁸Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p. 2.

²⁹Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), pp. 103–104. See also Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), pp. 105–106.

³⁰Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 3–6.

³¹Carolynne Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 1–3.

³²Philip Rance, ‘Attacotti, Deisi and Magnus Maximus: the Case for Irish Federates in Late Roman Britain’, *Britannia* 32 (2001).

³³Damian McManus, *A Guide to Ogam* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1991), p. 41.

³⁴Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 18–23.

³⁵Máire Herbert, ‘Becoming an Exile: Colum Cille in Middle-Irish Poetry’, in Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four

flocked to Irish established churches on the continent and facilitated the flow of information to and from the Continent. The Irish glosses on manuscripts from these continental churches, provide us with a glimpse of the life and work of these men.³⁶ Not only Biblical and Patristic literature entered the Irish consciousness by this means, but also the secular works studied by the educated classes in the early Medieval West, among which the works of Isidore of Seville were influential, especially in the areas of etymology and linguistics.³⁷ All these factors had a significant effect upon Irish wisdom literature; it is left to modern scholars to determine in what ways and to what extent.

Scholarly opinions on the effect of Christianity on early Irish culture and literature are various, but two camps developed early in the history of modern scholarship, which began in earnest in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first group dubbed ‘nativist’ scholars by some modern writers, sought to derive the literature from a pagan past, unhindered by the introduction of the new religion. This approach stressed the seemingly ageless quality of early Irish law and the mythological motifs and ideological patterns of early Irish literature as a whole. This analysis laid emphasis on the linguistic archaism of the source material and power to reflect on the Indo-European past.³⁸ The second group, now called the ‘Eurocentric’ or ‘anti-nativist’, rejected this analysis and argued that synchronic connections to the continent were more crucial to the understanding of early Irish literature. As time went by, the realisation grew that the Biblical aspects of the literature were pervasive and deeply embedded. This was made clear in a seminal article written by Liam Breatnach, Donnchadh Ó Corráin, and Aiden Breen in 1984. They showed that the Latin sentences within the ecclesiastical literature were translated, often word for word, into canonical Irish law texts, the oldest stratum of Irish available.³⁹ Since then, other scholars have continued to demonstrate fresh examples of the influence of Biblical literature on Irish literature; this is explored in fuller detail in Chapter 6.⁴⁰

The influence of the Bible on the wisdom literature of Ireland is not often overt. In *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*, for instance, there is only one explicit mention of religion as such.⁴¹ However, the possible author of the text was a renowned ecclesiastic and scholar who also

Courts Press, 2005).

³⁶Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, ed. D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1940 [repr. 1993]), p. 4. See also Michael Richter, ‘St. Gallen and the Irish in the Early Middle Ages’, in Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

³⁷Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 213–214.

³⁸Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 2–3.

³⁹Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, ‘The Laws of the Irish’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

⁴⁰See Liam Breatnach, ‘Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

⁴¹Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 13–14.

became king of Northumbria only on the elimination of his older half-brother.⁴² As to its provenance, the style of the text may well suggest an Anglo-Saxon origin: its pieces of wisdom and advice, when arranged by verb, remind one of the Anglo-Saxon *Runic Poem*, where each letter of the Runic alphabet is given its own stanza in alphabetical order.⁴³ Another example of this relatively subtle brand of influence is the *Tecosca Cormaic* where again overtly religious sentiment is not noticeable with the exception of one entry on ‘worshipping the great god’.⁴⁴ The style of *Tecosca Cormaic* is alliterative and nearly metrical. It consists of sequences of three-word lines containing approximately four syllables, alternating with five-word lines containing approximately seven syllables, the alternations corresponding to changes in the subject matter. A similar style is evident in the Book of Proverbs where, again, a nearly metrical style is found. These nearly metrical styles are also punctuated by full poems in certain chapters and by prose in other parts.⁴⁵ Despite the similarities there are differences: for instance, the Book of Proverbs contains parallelisms (eloquently described as ‘thought rhyme’ by Herder) whereas *Tecosca Cormaic* does not.⁴⁶ However, the purposes of the Book of Proverbs and *Tecosca Cormaic* are divergent. *Tecosca Cormaic* is located within the *Speculum Principis* genre where Cormac mac Airt gives advice to his son on how to be a successful king when his time comes.⁴⁷ The Book of Proverbs, on the other hand, seems to point to its use as a practical guide to the monarchical village life of early Israel and was later used for post-exilic teaching in the era of the Second Temple.⁴⁸

From the available evidence within early Irish literature, it appears that the Irish imbibed the new teaching with an enthusiasm that bordered on the fanatical. But that did not stop them from developing a lively critical understanding of the new information that reached them from Europe. This contention is borne out by examination of their way of understanding the physical universe and how this related to a book that never erred.⁴⁹ The imperfect nature of the universe was well understood; how this imperfection could be associated with a perfect Creator was mediated through the Bible. Those who understood the mysteries of the Biblical text understood

⁴²Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 52–56.

⁴³Carolyn Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 134–139.

⁴⁴Kuno Meyer, *The Instructions of King Cormac Mac Airt*, in Todd Lecture Series, vol. 25 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1909), p. 3.

⁴⁵Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), pp. 95–98.

⁴⁶Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972 [repr. 1988]), pp. 26–27.

⁴⁷Irish tradition placed the writing of this text to when Cormac was in exile after losing his eye. See Section 3.2.

⁴⁸Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), pp. 3–5.

⁴⁹Marina Smyth, *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-Century Ireland* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996).

how the perfect and the imperfect interacted on a cosmic level.⁵⁰

As noted above, however, the line between the distinctively Irish contribution and what is drawn from the Biblical, Classical, and Universal contexts is not clear. The temptation to overstate the case by drawing all early Irish literature into the Biblical/Classical orbit is a constant risk. For instance, *Cormac's Dream* (see Section 3.7) is seen by some modern scholars as a reflection of Joseph's interpretation of dreams in the Old Testament.⁵¹ The difficulty with this analysis of *Cormac's Dream* is that dream interpretation is a world-wide phenomenon and was widely practised in the Roman Empire with no obvious connection to the Hebrew Old Testament.⁵² The assessment of early Irish literature can also, however, be taken to the other extreme, where it has sometimes been argued that early Irish literature is essentially a reflection of proto-Indo-European culture, e. g. its conformity to the tripartite ideology expounded by the scholar Georges Dumézil.⁵³ These are extreme examples, but they are demonstrative of the ways in which a doctrinaire analysis can obscure the subject rather than clarify it. In analysing early Irish literature, scholars must stay open minded. Over-simplified or overgeneralised theories concerning the extant material cannot do justice to the competing influences that clearly shaped Irish literature in the early Christian period.

The Biblical and Classical traditions indisputably had a profound impact upon Irish thought and literature. Latin was the first language to be written in extended prose in Ireland. Irish, as a written language, extending beyond Ogam stone inscriptions, appeared within the sixth century with a script based upon that of Latin.⁵⁴ The lapse of time between the coming of literacy in Latin and the emergence of Irish as a written language allowed the Latin and Biblical literatures to have their effect upon the writing styles and tastes of the early Irish. How may this have affected the wisdom literature of the early Irish? *Tecosca Cormaic* seems to draw some aspects of its form from the Book of Proverbs, but its content is directed specifically towards kings and high-ranking lords in early Irish society. *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* may take its form from the wisdom literature of Anglo-Saxon England, but it simultaneously echoes the more earthy tone of the Book of Proverbs.⁵⁵ These two wisdom texts thus seem to marry Biblical

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 299–300.

⁵¹Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), p. 135.

⁵²See J. Donald Hughes, 'Dream Interpretation in Ancient Civilizations', *Dreaming* 10 (2000). See also Nora Chadwick, 'Dreams in Early European Literature', in James Carney and David Greene, eds., *Celtic Studies: Essays in Memory of Angus Matheson* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968).

⁵³See C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966). See also Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991) and Wouter W. Belier, 'The First Function', in Edgar C. Polomé, ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996).

⁵⁴Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 169–176.

⁵⁵Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína*

traditions with those of the Irish. One of these texts can be associated with a known, historical author while the other is anonymous; but both contain evidence for an ecclesiastical dimension. The question may be asked of whether any of the wisdom literature can be said to be wholly independent from it. In the saga literature, there is evidence for lexical borrowing, ostensibly from the Bible. For instance, in *Táin Bó Fraích*, the word *carrmocol*, ‘carbuncle’, appears in the list of gems and jewels in Fróech’s spear.⁵⁶ Carbuncles are not geologically native to Ireland, but they are found in the Old Testament.⁵⁷ While the author of *Táin Bó Fraích* may have inserted the carbuncle merely to add exoticism to the story, it is very possible that the Bible was the source of his inspiration. In addition to textual evidence for lexical borrowing, indirect evidence for Biblical and Classical influence occurs in more subtle ways. For example, *Echtrae Chonnlai*,⁵⁸ where the scholarly battle-lines are particularly well defined,⁵⁹ can be interpreted in different ways according to the inclination of the scholar; in polar terms it can appear as either thoroughly Christian or thoroughly pagan. The resolution of these problems of interpretation strikes at the heart of our understanding of early Ireland and its culture.

With critiques of earlier scholars’ methods of analysis completed, a fundamental question remains: how can one tell when an author is drawing upon a Biblical/Classical example? As intimated above, motif analysis is not a precise science. Different source categories appear to mingle and merge with one another on the page. When a story has different levels of meaning, different threads of symbolism will have been woven together to create it. This complexity coupled with the propensity of scribes to change various parts of a story, at times quite significantly, complicates the analysis for the modern scholar. Here, unfortunately, the organising metaphor for this chapter ceases to work, and indeed any organising metaphor seems likely to encounter problems. Categories which become too rigid lose their power to explain or even to organise the material to which they are applied. In the case of Biblical/Classical motifs, if a motif or feature of a story is clearly derived from a Biblical or Classical source, or if a part of a story can be located in a Biblical or Classical source directly, then it is most likely a borrowing. If the source of borrowing is ambiguous, the author may have intended it to be ambiguous, consciously manipulating symbols to create a multi-layered and multi-faceted text.⁶⁰ Conversely, if a motif occurs in numerous places in Irish literature, is unambiguous in its

maic Ossu (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 13–20.

⁵⁶Wolfgang Meid, ed., *Táin Bó Fraích* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967 [rev. 1974, repr. 1994]), p. 3.

⁵⁷Exodus 28:17 and 39:10; Ezekiel 28:13; Isaiah 54:12.

⁵⁸Kim McCone, ed., *Echtrae Chonnlai and the Beginnings of Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, and Bibliography and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: Kim McCone, 2000).

⁵⁹See Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 79–83.

⁶⁰Transformation of signs and symbols often happens in relation with St Patrick, see Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 90–92.

usage, and is not capable of derivation from the Biblical and Classical literatures, then it is most likely Irish in origin. The acknowledgement of this ambiguity allows one also to acknowledge creativity on the part of the authors and scribes of stories and tales which appear in early Irish sources. Invoking ambiguity may seem like an attempt to avoid dilemmas when analysing texts of this type. But its legitimate and useful function is to make space for volition and creativity on the part of authors and scribes. In doing so it allows the modern scholar to appreciate the intelligence, entertainment, and instructional value of medieval Irish material. The introduction of ambiguity also acknowledges the current limits of our knowledge of the subject matter, and the random survival of material to modern times.

The introduction of the Biblical and Classical texts into Ireland stimulated the Irish to write their own stories and epics and, in general, to create a literature to rival that of the great civilisations. This can be clearly shown in regard to the creation of the idea of the High Kingship of Ireland,⁶¹ and likewise in the synchronisation of important Irish dynasties with the history of Israel, Rome, and other ancient civilisations.⁶² In a sense, the Irish scholars must have felt it necessary to bring themselves into line with continental Europe because their honour-bound culture would not allow them to be anything less. This cultural self-belief would drive them not only to be the most orthodox of Christians, as seen in the *computus* controversies⁶³ and missionary endeavours,⁶⁴ but also to create a literature that would rival that of Greece, Rome and Israel, while at the same time acknowledging the greatness of those cultures from which they drew inspiration.⁶⁵

In this mission to prove their greatness, the authors of early Irish literature used wisdom literature as part of their programme. Their evidence was gleaned through both the Old and New Testaments because they wished, through their use of synchronisation, to align their own pre-history with that of continental Europe and the Near East. As *Auricept na nÉces* ('Primer of the Poets') states, the three holy languages were Latin, Hebrew, and Greek, but Irish was

⁶¹While the High King of Ireland is mostly noted in the annals about the tenth century, the idea itself developed earlier. See Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 227–228 and Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 18.

⁶²Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 66–72. See also R. Mark Scowcroft, 'Leabhar Gabhála—Part II: The Growth of the Tradition', *Ériu* 39 (1988), pp. 32–45.

⁶³Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 201–203; T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 391–415; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'Early Irish Annals from Easter Tables: A Case Restated', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 2 (1983).

⁶⁴See, for example, Donald Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', in Michael Lapidge, ed., *Columbanus: Studies on Latin Writings* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997). For the background of missionary activity in Western Europe, see J. N. Hillgarth, 'Modes of Evangelization of Western Europe in the Seventh Century', in Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter, eds., *Ireland and Christendom: The Bible and The Missions* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987).

⁶⁵Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 35–37.

created out of the best of all the other languages after the fall of the tower of Babel.⁶⁶ This cultural self-confidence led to the synchronisation of early Irish history with that of the Roman Empire and, further back, with that of the ancient Israelites. The best example of these thought processes at work is the attempt to equate the pre-Patrician Irish and the ancient Israelites in the dispensations from God found in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*.⁶⁷ Once that equation had been made, provisions in early Irish law, both ecclesiastical and ‘secular’, could be tied directly or indirectly to statements found in the Old Testament. In the *Bretha im Gatta*, for example, the variation in recompense for theft between the different animals was not a normal feature of early Irish law, especially as regards the high value assigned to the horse.⁶⁸

2.2.1 The Law in the Biblical and Classical Traditions

Before continuing with the Irish manifestations of wisdom literature, consideration must be given to the law as it affected the development of wisdom literature. The position of the law from the Biblical and Classical perspective is a complex one, and a challenging topic to manage in a limited amount of space. The medieval world had its earliest beginnings in the often chaotic events of late antiquity. The initial shock of the barbarian invasions led to an understanding between barbarian and Roman, as the law codes produced during the period demonstrate. Roman law, both divine and secular, survived the political tumult, and Roman lawyers can be found offering their services to the barbarians to codify their laws and record changes to the law.⁶⁹ Thus, while the native administrative offices of the Western Roman Empire has ceased to operate, and were replaced by direct military rule after the ousting of the last Western Emperor the administrative departments and legal activity continued. This military rule, which was heavily staffed with non-Romans, had very little effect upon the relationship of East to West. The military nominally recognised the Eastern Emperor as their sovereign, while the Eastern Emperor recognised the military’s supremacy in the West. While this convenient

⁶⁶ Anders Ahlqvist, *The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the Auraicept na nÉces, with Introduction, Commentary, and Indices* (Helsinki: Helsinki Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1983), pp. 97–98. For analysis, see Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 36–37.

⁶⁷ John Carey, ‘An Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*’, *Ériu* 45 (1994). See also D. A. Binchy, ‘The Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*’, *Studia Celtica* 10–11 (1975–76), Kim McCone, ‘Dubthach Maccu Lugair and a Matter of Life and Death in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986), R. Mark Scowcroft, ‘Recht Fáide and Its Glosses in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchus Mar*’, *Ériu* 53 (2003), and John Carey, ‘The Two Laws in Dubthach’s Judgment’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 19 (1990). For historical assessment, see Nerys Patterson, ‘Gaelic Law and the Tudor Conquest of Ireland: The Social Background of the Sixteenth-Century Recensions of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*’, *Irish Historical Studies* 27 (1991).

⁶⁸ Vernam Hull, ‘Bretha im Gatta’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 25 (1956). See also Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 147–149; Marilyn Gerriets, ‘Theft, Penitentials, and the Compilation of the Early Irish Laws’, *Celtica* 22 (1991).

⁶⁹ P. S. Barnwell, ‘Emperors, Jurists, and Kings: Law and Custom in the Late Roman and Early Medieval West’, *Past and Present* 168 (2000).

arrangement did not solve all the problems of the Western Empire, it brought stability in certain respects, and provided a viable basis for holding the Western Empire together.

Legal activity included that initiated by the Roman Church though its continual attempts to regulate its churches and its parishioners. While the collapse of the Western Roman Empire inevitably had an effect upon the Church, the Pope was still in regular contact with the Eastern Emperor and was often used as a pawn by forces within the Eastern Church, as they called on him to validate points of theology in their favour.⁷⁰ These controversies, which disrupted the Eastern Church on a regular basis, were often initiated by politically minded bishops and patriarchs. They continued until the invasion of the Lombards in the eighth century which effectively ended the ancient world.⁷¹

The foregoing brief remarks on the late antique period set the scene for discussion of the place of law in the Biblical and Classical traditions. There were two types of law, which existed in parallel. The first was divine law, which was set down by God through Christ's incarnation on Earth.⁷² The second was secular law, which was continually being developed mainly by the local or provincial rulers who inherited the administration of Roman law in the territories they controlled. Divine law was formed and modified by debate and discussion among the bishops of the Church in their various councils and synods. The more conservative stance of the Roman Church, especially in its response to the Council of Nicaea regarding the nature of the Trinity, provoked intense effort on the part of the Eastern Church and made relations more strained. It would seem from the reaction of the councils after Nicaea that the Western bishops were satisfied with the compromise position, while the Eastern bishops were more concerned by various philosophical differences embedded in the monophysite versus duophysite positions. The effect was that, while the supremacy of the Pope in Rome was not, as yet, a point of contention, his was one voice among many in the councils which were continually being called by the Eastern bishops. Changes in divine law were important because divine law regulated the various monastic and non-monastic Churches of the West. The pastoral care which was encapsulated within divine law and elaborated by various theologians regulated important aspects of the private lives of ordinary parishioners, while its more political dimensions were frequently in contention between kings and the Western Church. This tension reflected the political situation in the Western Empire. In the Eastern Empire, by contrast, convincing the Emperor of the correctness of a theological position was the most important prelude to legal reform. On the other hand, the codification of the various strands of Roman law by Justinian had reverberations for centuries to come and, in fact, forms the fundamental basis of European

⁷⁰Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200–1000*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp. 134–139.

⁷²Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 423–425.

law today. While divine law was superior in theory, the interface between divine law and secular law was a practical daily concern for citizens of the empire, both East and West.

The Irish scholars arrived into this political and theological environment and brought with them the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* (CCH), one of the most widely used collections of canon law in the medieval period.⁷³ In this remarkable collection the early Irish scholars clearly articulated their guiding principles on law and justice, both for clerics within monastic foundations and for lay members of the Church. CCH codified and regulated the life of the Christians both in personal matters, such as marriage⁷⁴ and contracts,⁷⁵ and in larger political contexts such as attempts to regulate kings.⁷⁶ In one sense, CCH is law, but it also attempted to explain law in theological terms and language, much of which was taken directly from the Old Testament, e. g. with regard to the Church's position in relation to society. Bishops were enjoined to venerate CCH on account of its connections to St Patrick and the First Synod of the Irish. The problem here is that, if vernacular law which was written down about the same time as CCH was composed is a reliable source, then CCH is more an ideal policy statement than an enforceable law code. Other than the threat of excommunication, there was no ultimate way to enforce the strictures of Canon law. The Irish Penitentials give more information on the inculcation of certain social mores by the Church, but they do not impinge materially on the domains of the secular law, although one could argue that the hand of the Church was never far away, as clerical scholars were heavily involved in the recording and codification of the Irish vernacular law system.⁷⁷ It would seem that the result of this influence was a compromise, and a process of integration in which members of the old learned order were recruited by the organisation of the new faith. A few magical injunctions and other pagan elements survived but the organisational elements were those of the Christian church.⁷⁸ These elements, including the hierarchical structure of the ecclesiastical grades, were applied to the higher echelons of early Irish society.⁷⁹ This compromise of the old and the new was given a myth, the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*, which was prefixed secular equivalent of CCH, i. e. the authoritative collection of the vernacular law texts, to give the new collection legitimacy (see

⁷³For possible transmission routes to Francia, see Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara, and Soissons* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1985), pp. 85–94. See also Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organization in Ireland A. D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999), pp. 47–49.

⁷⁴Akiko Tatsuki, 'The Early Irish Church and Marriage: an Analysis of the *Hibernensis*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 15 (2001), pp. 195–207; Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Marriage and Sexuality in the *Hibernensis*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 11 (1997), pp. 188–206.

⁷⁵Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organization in Ireland A. D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999), pp. 305–307.

⁷⁶Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara, and Soissons* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1985).

⁷⁷See Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984) and Liam Breatnach, 'The Ecclesiastical Element in the Old-Irish Legal Tract *Cáin Fhuithirbe*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986).

⁷⁸Liam Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar: The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987), pp. 85–87.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 85–89.

Section 3.8 below).

The teaching of the new faith, including views on society that were radically different from the views found within early Irish legal literature, was superimposed on the older law and, over time, the Church heavily influenced the making and recording of law. This is very clear in the category of law texts entitled *cáin*, which were drafted by clerics and then promulgated by kings when they took office; the evidence for this is clearest in the annals.⁸⁰ For instance, *Cáin Fhuithirbe* clearly demonstrates the ecclesiastical influence on the law.⁸¹ This rapprochement, however, does not appear to have made the Church into the most important maker and implementer of both 'secular' and canon law. In any event, there is no obvious direct evidence for case law for Ireland at the time, and the influence of canon law upon daily life is unknown.⁸² However, the penitential books written by Irish scholars domiciled in medieval Europe suggest that the regulation of the laity's personal lives was considered appropriate by the Church.⁸³ The penitential books also show that consideration was given to the proper role of the Church in Irish society, and issues involving the Church were kept separate from disputes arising between secular parties and adjudicated under 'secular' law. Possibly, it was a reflection of the strength of tradition within Irish society that, on the one hand, the Irish wanted salvation through the new faith, but on the other hand, they were not completely comfortable about changing the most deeply embedded customs of their society. This resistance to change could have shielded those aspects of early Irish law which directly affected the status of kings and their various obligations, thereby giving secular rulers a degree of independence from the Church.

In this way, the Irish situation contributed to the diversity of legal and political arrangements in medieval Europe. While theoretically canon law was everywhere superior to secular law, in practice, it is a complex undertaking to determine the respective contributions of canon and secular law to the historical development of the law in different kingdoms. There were fundamental tensions between the secular and the divine world-views, but practical compromises and understandings between the two underpinned daily life in medieval Europe. The greater level of independence shown by the kings of the barbarian kingdoms on the continent was probably due to the availability of men of letters who were not as closely associated with the Church as their counterparts in Ireland.⁸⁴ With their support, a king could more fully control the process by which he created and promulgated laws on his own behalf.⁸⁵

⁸⁰T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 559–569.

⁸¹Liam Breatnach, 'The Ecclesiastical Element in the Old-Irish Legal Tract *Cáin Fhuithirbe*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986).

⁸²Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 238–241.

⁸³Ludwig Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963). See also Marilyn Gerriets, 'Theft, Penitentials, and the Compilation of the Early Irish Laws', *Celtica* 22 (1991).

⁸⁴P. S. Barnwell, 'Emperors, Jurists, and Kings: Law and Custom in the Late Roman and Early Medieval West', *Past and Present* 168 (2000).

⁸⁵For a close look at this process, see Patrick Wormald, *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image, and Experience* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1999), pp. 1–43.

However, these developments had to do with the power structures of ecclesiastical and secular society in early Ireland rather than the dissemination of wisdom specifically. During this period, wisdom literature continued to flourish. While it may not have been truly important to those in power, it was committed to vellum; presumably wisdom texts were considered useful or, at least, innocuous by the Church. However, elements were added or rearranged to better fit the authors' or scribes' conception of a Christian world-view. One of those to whom such elements may have been added was Cormac mac Airt, who could have come to be considered the Irish equivalent of the Hebrew Solomon. The principal wisdom text ascribed to him takes care to make the connection between the two texts and cultures (see above). As Church law and Irish law were integrated, so was the wisdom literature changed through exposure to Biblical Wisdom. In the oldest wisdom texts, however, the signs of Christian influence are minor and peripheral.⁸⁶

2.3 The Irish

Whereas the last section addressed the impact of Biblical and Classical literature, both in terms of direct textual influence and as a general stimulus on Irish literature, this section discusses the particularly Irish concerns that are evident within their wisdom literature. The focus here is not on form or context, but on content. It is in its content that early Irish literature displays with unique clarity the preoccupations of the literate class in the early Middle Ages in Ireland.

All forms of wisdom literature discussed above are also evident in the Irish material. The dialogue is used to great effect both in straightforward wisdom literature such as *Tecosca Cormaic*, where the dialogue between father and son is a vehicle for the *Speculum Principis*, and in formally specialised texts such as the *Finnsruth Fíthail*, where the dialogue is less developed and the text is in a more traditional, instructional form. This traditional form places the text in the specific context of the law, as was noted previously, like *Gúbretha Caratniad*. An interesting aspect of the *Finnsruth Fíthail* is that Fíthal and Socht are identified as the speakers by the scribe in one of the versions of the text but without any indication of their relationship. In the later tradition Socht becomes the son of Fíthal; compare Flaithrí, another son of Fíthal, who appears in the tale literature but not in the surviving legal literature. In the absence of further evidence for a familial relationship between Fíthal and Socht, it appears that the father and son pairing in wisdom literature was such a powerful attractor that even though Socht was only a student of Fíthal in the original text, it was just a matter of time before he would become the son of Fíthal. In other wisdom traditions, such as the Egyptian and Babylonian, one also finds a spiritual or wisdom 'father' with a student who is often designated as the wise man's 'son'.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Fergus Kelly, *Audacht Moraim* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976).

⁸⁷Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of

That Socht became Fíthal's son in later literature is a natural extension of his role in *Finn̄sruth Fíthail*, possibly also reflecting his role in other texts written by later authors.

The proverb or epigraph form is extant in *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*. Here each proverbial category is distinguished by the main verb of the sentence. While this principle of clarification is partially present in *Tecosca Cormaic*, the paragraphs are not categorised by a main verb, but loosely distinguished by topic. Gnostic statements are also found in Irish, in the text *Trecheng Breth Féne* 'a triad of the judgements of Ireland', which arranges the epigraphs into groups of three by theme.⁸⁸ A similar technique is used in the legal Heptads, which group topics by seven.⁸⁹ The nature lyric is likewise represented in Irish literature, though it has not been systematically collected into one volume either in the tradition itself or by modern scholars. That is to say, nature lyrics are found scattered over a number of manuscripts. A problem arises with regard to this kind of literature, in that they have often been said by modern scholars to be the products of hermit monks. However, the whole concept of hermit monk as nature lyricist has been shown to ignore the context within which the poems appear in the manuscripts, with over-dependence on the aesthetic value of the poetry itself.⁹⁰ As with the lyric, so also with the riddle, there are problems of understanding to be addressed. Some scholars have suggested that the legal *roscad*, a particularly demanding alliterative poem, is to be termed a riddle because of its obscure nature and possible association with other kinds of wisdom literature, such as instructions. Those items of prose which are identified as riddles are, on the whole, not a part of the literature proper except where they appear as parts of prose saga tales; they generally occur in the margins of manuscripts, as may be seen in the catalogues of Irish manuscripts, where they appear alongside charms and recipes to cure headaches, baldness, impotence, etcetera. There is thus no separate collection of Irish riddles to parallel what we find in other wisdom literatures such as the Anglo-Saxon riddle texts contained in the *Exeter Book*.⁹¹ But in general the commonly found form of wisdom literature – dialogue, proverb, epigraph, gnome, nature lyric, and riddle – are all well represented in early Irish literature.

As stated above, the riddle was used as an instructional tool in the Welsh and Irish law schools.⁹² The clearest example of this is *Gúbretha Caratniad*, which chronicles the question-

Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 42–43.

⁸⁸Kuno Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland*, (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co., 1906).

⁸⁹CIH 1.1–64.5; 1881.9–1896.22; 537.16–549.18; 1821.28–1854.36.

⁹⁰Patrick K. Ford, *Blackbirds, Cuckoos, and Infixed Pronouns: Another Context for Early Irish Nature Poetry*, in Ronald Black, William Gillies and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999).

⁹¹Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 127–130. See also Carolyn Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 148–156.

⁹²Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Instructional Riddles in Welsh Law', in Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005).

and-answer dialogue involving Caratnia, a judge, and Conn Cétchathach, his king. Within the dialogue, the king asks his judge complex questions of law and his judge responds with an unexpected answer. The king then accuses his judge of lying, but the judge retorts with specific legal reasons as to why he answered in such ways. The riddle-like structure has been exposed by Robin Stacey.⁹³ She also identifies Caratnia's wisdom-figure characteristics in the prologue to the text. *Gúbretha* as a teaching text would introduce the student to two problems: first, that the law can have obscure outcomes and that a good judge will know the exceptions to the rule, as well as the rule itself; second, the relationship between judge and king, where this text highlights how the judge should sculpt the professional relationship between judge and king, and at the same time continue to provide the traditional legal service for which the king and others pay the judge. This dialogue also shows affinity with the dialogue *Solomon and Saturn* in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, with the exception that the foci are dissimilar. In *Solomon and Saturn* the focus is on Solomon converting the pagan god Saturn to Christianity. In *Gúbretha*, the focus is on the status of the law and judges as noted above. Both texts invoke riddles: *Gúbretha* has legal riddles, *Solomon and Saturn* have spiritual riddles. They both mix different wisdom literature forms and styles to produce their instructional texts. This demonstrates the great flexibility inherent in wisdom literature, and the varying uses to which wisdom forms could be put.

The *Speculum Principis*, which is the only form of wisdom literature to have a targeted audience, is also contained within the Irish wisdom literature corpus. The two most famous of these texts in early Irish are *Audacht Morainn* and *Tecosca Cormaic*. The form appears thereafter all over the European continent, and versions were composed in Latin and many vernacular languages. The most famous of these compositions is Machiavelli's *The Prince*.⁹⁴ Although, the sections on ruthlessness are the most cited, they are only part of a voluminous work in which allusions to ancient Rome and other cultures and polities give Machiavelli's thoughts on power the aura of authority. The *Speculum Principis* as found in Irish literary sources takes the shape of advice given by a wisdom figure, such as Morann or Cormac mac Airt, to an heir apparent or, in the case of Morann, an intermediary who will deliver the advice to the young king. In later times, this function and the wisdom figure who discharged it would make their appearance in praise poetry, which included wisdom among the qualities it sought to instill in rulers. It mostly used stock motifs or phrases to do this, but also made explicit allusions to wisdom figures such as Morann and Cormac mac Airt. The allusions would be enough for the recipient, either a king or a strong contender for the post,⁹⁵ to recall the relevant text, and this would communicate the

⁹³Robin Stacey, 'Speaking in Riddles', in Próinséas Ní Chatháin, ed., *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

⁹⁴Niccoló Machiavelli, *The Prince*, (London: Penguin, 1999).

⁹⁵Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 155–158.

poet's intention.⁹⁶

As discussed in the foregoing sections, early Irish wisdom literature shows examples of all the literary forms which predominate in other parts of Europe, the Near East, and other traditional cultures around the world. While absorbing themes that they found in the literature they encountered on the European continent, the Irish scholars also imparted their own grasp of wisdom, albeit influenced by Biblical and Classical styles, as they strove to articulate their own context in Irish for the Irish audience, and for the wider audience in Latin. For example, the earliest known version of the type of tale known later as the *immram* 'journey' was the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, which first circulated in Latin and then became the template for Irish renderings.⁹⁷ The unique additive in Irish wisdom literature was not its form, function, or style but its content.

2.3.1 The Unique Content of Irish Wisdom Literature

While the presence and function of wisdom literature are universal, the forms it takes reflect the experiences of individual societies. In essence, wisdom must be immediately understood by the audience both for what it is and for what it tells us to do. The wise were wise not only because they could bring forth the wise sayings, but because they knew when to apply wisdom in specific situations and how to apply it so that their audience, whether aristocratic warrior or peasant, could grasp the specific guidance being offered and the authority from which it proceeded. This is particularly true when discussing the perplexing sayings (at least, perplexing to modern eyes) that crop up in the wisdom literature of early Ireland. However, as a mixed agricultural and pastoral society that looked to its pastoralism as its greatest strength, Ireland had differing concerns from those of the continent.⁹⁸ For instance, the *Catonis Disticha*, which was known in Ireland in the early medieval period,⁹⁹ had as its focus an urban and rigidly hierarchical society, which reflects its creation in the late antique period.¹⁰⁰ Ireland, on the other hand, was not urbanised like continental Europe until relatively late in its history, and relied upon familial and clan ties with relatively loose connections at the supra-tribal level. Ireland's wisdom literature reflects this, for example, in *Tecosca Cormaic*, where emphasis is placed upon the king's generosity, his cultivation of his lords, and his hostages. These methods of control and social relations are not mirrored on the continent in the early medieval period and they demonstrate Ireland's different culture in that respect. A further and more striking example is

⁹⁶See Matthew Innes, 'Memory, Orality, and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society', *Past and Present* 158 (1998).

⁹⁷Jonathan M. Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: an Anthology of Criticism* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000). See also, Carl Selmer, ed., *Navigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis: from Early Latin Manuscripts* (Dublin: University of Notre Dame Press [repr. Four Courts Press], 1959 [repr. 1989]).

⁹⁸Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997), pp. 27–29.

⁹⁹Carolyn Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnomie Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 97.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 115–116.

provided by the styles of kingship enumerated in *Audacht Morainn*. Here the need to distinguish types and styles of leadership is universal; each kind of leader is theoretically possible and can readily be understood outside the Irish environment. However, the names chosen for the different kinds of kings are unique to Ireland and Irish cultural circumstances.

Like early Irish law, Irish wisdom literature gives a picture of, and insight into, a society which had blended Universal and Biblical forms to suit its own circumstances. Both law and wisdom literature provide a picture of a society deeply engrossed in familial and tribal relations, i. e. the social forms particular to the Irish. Thus, in *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*, the proverbs urge respect for the law,¹⁰¹ and at times urge the reader to generosity, hospitality, and hard work,¹⁰² while also urging the reader to avoid legal obligations.¹⁰³ In the *Trecheng Breth Féne*, the statements are not only arranged in triads but the first sixty-one entries are constructed around place-name lore. The proverb or epigraph here is clothed in a form that is culturally appropriate, hence the emphasis on place-names. For wisdom literature to function appropriately, it must contain cultural references which are immediately identifiable to its reader or, if spoken, the listener. For the Irish audience references to place-names, kings, warriors, and legal forms which were particular only to them, all add to the content of their wisdom literature. It is here rather than in the literary form or context that the unique Irish experience is brought to bear on ancient, universal function of instruction.

Before moving on to the particular placement of Fíthal in the wisdom literature of Ireland, note must be taken of a particular wisdom text. The only wisdom text that has ever been attributed to an historical figure in Irish literature is *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*, where Flann Fína is the Irish name of Aldfrith of Northumbria. The structure of the text suggests a debt to Anglo-Saxon wisdom literature, in the way that it arranges its epigraphs by main verb. The problem with this explanation lies not in its structure but in its tone. Colin Ireland, the most recent editor of the text, maintains that it was not meant for those of the upper echelons of society, on account of its emphasis on hard work, having a good wife, skills and arts, and tools.¹⁰⁴ If the text was meant for those of the lower social classes, how were these people supposed to read it when literacy was confined to the upper classes and, possibly, restricted to a 'mandarin' literate class?¹⁰⁵ Memorisation was the obvious method of teaching and learning texts in pre-literate societies, but we know too little about any aspects of the 'education' of the artisan or unfree classes in early Irish society to form an opinion as to the plausibility or otherwise of Ireland's suggestion. The *óenach* may have provided an occasion for the public a recitation of the wisdom

¹⁰¹ 3.6, 3.7, 3.7a, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12.

¹⁰² 1.1, 1.1a, 1.2, 1.13, 1.14, 1.26, 1.42, 2.4, 2.4a, 2.5, 6.1, 6.37, 6.38, 6.47, 6.48, 6.49, 6.73, 6.82, 6.98, 6.100.

¹⁰³ 2.1, 3.7, 3.7a, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.29, 5.3a, 6.8, 6.8a, 6.8b.

¹⁰⁴ Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 13–20.

¹⁰⁵ T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Context and Uses of Literacy in Early Christian Ireland', in Huw Pryce, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

texts, among the other entertainments to which the *Metrical Dindsenchas* alludes; but we simply do not know.¹⁰⁶ In any event, *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* seems to show the influence of the Book of Proverbs, not so much in form as in tone. Aldfrith was a prominent ecclesiastic and, as such, would have been well acquainted with the contents of the Book of Proverbs. The creative side of Aldfrith is demonstrated; he could easily have taken the epigraphical form well-used in the Anglo-Saxon world and combined it with the down-to-earth tone of the Book of Proverbs to create a text which reflected his knowledge of the Old Testament and his experiences of Anglo-Saxon wisdom literature.¹⁰⁷ As to its intended audience, *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* was not aimed literally at ‘the people’, it may have been meant for other ecclesiastics and those high-ranking lay people who had been educated at the monastery schools found throughout Ireland. A possible problem with this understanding of the text is the lack of references to the church or to God. The Book of Proverbs is replete with exhortations to the deity, while at the same time staying close to the earthly concerns of daily life. Could Irish influence have caused Aldfrith to eschew an overtly religious tone? As we have seen, *Tecosca Cormaic* has only one explicit reference to God and this is in its first section. The other wisdom texts are likewise silent, or nearly so, on the subject; so it may be that Aldfrith used Irish exemplars to determine the degree of religiosity to apply to his own composition. Of course, this does not mean that Biblical considerations were not present in the creation of the text, but that its creator preferred to eliminate explicit references to God, for whatever literary, cultural or doctrinal reason.

2.3.2 Personification of Wisdom

One of the notions which the Old Testament authors encouraged, which does not seem to appear in the extant material in Irish, is the personification of Wisdom. This is especially true of the first eight verses of the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Wisdom, which personify Wisdom as various female figures ranging from wife and lover to the first child of God.¹⁰⁸ While personification of Wisdom occurs widely in the Near East and other ancient cultures of the Mediterranean,¹⁰⁹ it appears that the Irish avoided it; at least, it does not occur in their surviving literature. This raises the question: if the Irish scholars were well aware of the practice of personifying abstract qualities in other literatures, why did they not use it in their own wisdom literature? In other cultures, the wisdom figure or teacher was a conduit for wisdom to the student or, in the case of literature, to the reader. In this context, wisdom is envisioned as a being beyond, and logically prior to, the wisdom figure. In other words, abstract Wisdom can be deduced from the wisdom of the teacher, and personification of Wisdom was a natural

¹⁰⁶For more information on the *óenach* and *dindsenchas*, see Section 4.3.2.

¹⁰⁷Colin Ireland, ‘Aldfrith of Northumbria and the Irish Genealogies’, *Celtica* 22 (1991).

¹⁰⁸Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), pp. 133–149.

¹⁰⁹Alice Mary Sinnott, *The Personification of Wisdom* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), pp. 10–52.

development from this.

Another reason for puzzlement at the absence of an abstract figure of Wisdom is that we know the early Irish tradition was familiar with the principle of personifying abstract concepts, by virtue of Irish treatment of kingship and the Sovereignty Goddess.¹¹⁰ We need to ask why the same treatment was not extended to Wisdom. Possibly this could be attributed to the fact that it had already been done in the Bible and thus needed no further elaboration. This argument, however, fails to convince in the face of the pervasive effects of the Sovereignty Goddess on early Irish literature; clearly, the Irish were well able to exploit personification within their own literary and cultural milieu. Another way of thinking about the relationship between Wisdom and the wisdom figure is to conjecture that wisdom figures or teachers of wisdom took the place of the personification of Wisdom. Instead of making Wisdom wholly Other, they perhaps invested the wisdom figure himself with the attributes of Wisdom; thus obviating any need to postulate a more remote deified figure of Wisdom, as happened in the Book of Wisdom and in Proverbs 1–8. In a sense, the Irish procedure exalted the wisdom figure at the expense of Wisdom itself, but this need not be seen as surprising; whereas the Sovereignty Goddess was fundamental to the ‘mystery’ of kingship, wisdom was merely one of the attributes she bestowed on the rightful king. Nature would not rebel against an unwise king but against an unjust one; therefore, sovereignty, as the source of *fir flathemon*, needed to be portrayed as external to the king in a way that was unnecessary for wisdom and for other abstract qualities.¹¹¹ If one were talking about ‘Judge’s Truth’ rather than ‘King’s Truth’, it might be a different story but in the Christian period that might have been thought to infringe on the prerogative of the Christian Deity as supreme wisdom-figure and judge.

As indicated above, in Universal terms, wisdom and law were not always clearly differentiated, and in Biblical/Classical terms, canon law and biblical wisdom were combined with native wisdom that was already extant in Ireland at the time. The fusion of law and wisdom in the Irish context was explicit. The Triads and the Heptads are filled with direct textual borrowing from the law. In fact, they form a large part of the basis of what modern scholars now know about early Irish law. The law also makes several appearances in *Tecosca Cormaic*, which is primarily a wisdom text, as something which any king should consider during his reign. In a different wisdom text, Morann, himself a mythological judge, gives advice to a king. Specialisation of social and labour functions is not a common feature of cultures where the labour intensity is high and population low; thus one person may, at any one time, fulfil various social and labour roles in society.

¹¹⁰Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 57–72.

¹¹¹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 18–21. For a similar effect upon judges, see *ibid.*, pp. 54–55. See also, Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 77–81.

2.3.3 Saints and Wisdom Literature

One of the more curious aspects of the wisdom literature of Ireland is the lack of saintly contributions to the wisdom literature. In Irish hagiographical literature, little emphasis was placed upon a saint's wise counsel. Instead, the emphasis was placed upon the saint's miracles, his or her direct relationship to the divine, the saint's self-discipline in the monastic life, and in a few cases the saint's harsh treatment of their own followers.¹¹² The only saint whose persona was directly linked with wisdom literature is Colum Cille. However, even he is shown more as a patron of poets than as a poet himself. Although a few poems of those attributed to him could be considered wise utterances, there is no evidence that these poems were actually written by the saint.¹¹³ In the literature about him, Colum Cille is shown to be more interested in the dispute involving the poets and their patrons over poets' pay than he is in wisdom literature.¹¹⁴

The saint, as a literary character, seems to work as God's 'enforcer' on Earth. Often, in hagiographical texts, he is made to use his special status to curse kings who do not do as the saint decrees.¹¹⁵ While eternal life in paradise was the carrot to attract people, it is suggested, the curse of a saint and the threat of eternal torment, if his mandates were not followed, were the sticks with which to beat them into conformity with the saint's and, it may be supposed, the Church's wishes.

Wisdom literature does not emphasise the spiritual life more than the social interactions and practical choices made by individuals. As biblical scholars have noted, the Book of Proverbs often invokes God; yet, the situations within which God is invoked are clearly mundane.¹¹⁶ Thus, although wisdom figures and saints have the same overall objectives, the paths they follow are distinct.¹¹⁷ The saint focused on the spiritual life as exemplified by the life and suffering of Christ. The wisdom figure, on the other hand, focused on the daily interactions of individuals within society. The wise man understood the nature of mankind, while the saint understood the nature of the divine. While these pursuits were not wholly distinct, as shown above in the example of Colum Cille, saints and wisdom figures did not normally interact. The Irish saint and the Irish wisdom figure both dwelt in the world of Irish myth, but they belonged to different eras. The resurrection of Cú Chulainn by St Patrick as a demonstration to the High King Lóegaire does not really complicate this matter, even if Cú Chulainn was portrayed as a wisdom figure

¹¹²For another view of the Irish saint, see Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. vii–x and Daniel Fredrick Melia, 'The Irish Saint as Shaman', *Pacific Coast Philology* 18 (1983).

¹¹³Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 152–156.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 169–78.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. viii–ix.

¹¹⁶Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p. 131.

¹¹⁷An interesting parallel can be made here between the wisdom teachers and cultic authorities in ancient Israel. See Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972 [repr. 1988]), pp. 186–189.

once in the literature.¹¹⁸ For Patrick did not resurrect Cú Chulainn to have a discourse about wisdom, but to display St Patrick's divine-given power.

Wisdom figures found in Irish literature were predominantly pre-Christian, with the notable exception of Aldfrith of Northumbria (though this problem was rectified by the author of the L recension of Aldfrith's wisdom text). Saints were a post-conversion phenomenon and, despite some rough edges, embody Christian spiritual values rather than practical wisdom. Saints' lives were written to show Christian readers how to aim for heaven. Wisdom texts were written to show their readers how to conduct themselves on Earth. This distinction may help to explain the reassignment of *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* to Fíthal, and also why saints do not have wisdom texts attributed to them.

2.3.4 Historical Uses of Wisdom Literature

In purely historical terms, there are very few persons identified as judges or wise men in the Irish annals.¹¹⁹ Those identified as such are ecclesiastical, and the title of 'judge' or 'wise man' itself is of little value as it was applied fairly indiscriminately to many who were recorded in the annals.¹²⁰ This indiscriminate usage makes it arduous to determine who, in fact, was considered wise; and objective, discursive prose history was not a genre of early Irish literature of which we have any evidence. There is one jurist who appears in the literature and could be identified as a wise man: Giolla na Naomh mac Duinn Shléibhe mhic Aodhagáin, who wrote a poem addressed to a student of the law which enumerates the topics and people he must know to be a good lawyer (see Section 4.1.2). It will suffice to say here that the poem gives a basic outline of the situation of the law and wisdom literature in thirteenth century Ireland. Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, the editor of the text, states that the section of the poem referring to wisdom literature was meant to instruct the student of the law on how to engage the élites or to make them become better rulers in the traditional sense.¹²¹ The thesis advanced by Ní Dhonnchadha does not engage with the idea that the law and wisdom literature are intimately connected. However, this poem does show that lawyers, at least in the thirteenth century, were aware of the connection and that they were passing wisdom literature down to their students. While judges were not valued as highly as poets, possibly because of the view that they were artisans, the cultivation of wisdom literature was apparently entrusted to judges as part of their duties in regard to the law.¹²²

¹¹⁸Roland Smith, 'Bríathartheosc Con Culainn', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 15 (1925), p. 187-192.

¹¹⁹For a discussion of the possibility of a metrical history now lost, see Gregory Toner, 'Authority, Verse and the Transmission of *Senchas*', *Ériu* 55 (2005), p. 59-84.

¹²⁰Wilson McLeod, 'The Rhetorical Geography of Late Medieval Irish Chronicles', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 40 (2002), pp. 57-68.

¹²¹Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, 'An Address to a Student of Law', in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, eds., *Sages, Saints, and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), p. 162.

¹²²Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 51-56.

As for the wisdom literature to which Giolla na Naomh mac Duinn Shléibhe mhic Aodhagáin referred, it seems from his verses of the poems that the law was regarded as akin to wisdom literature. As noted above, excerpts from the wisdom literature of Ireland were used by scholars of early Irish law to explain or illuminate legal points that were obscure. There are two obvious ways in which law could have been incorporated into wisdom: first, those who wrote wisdom literature in Ireland were themselves lawyers; second, those who wrote wisdom literature in Ireland were well acquainted with the law among other things. The idea that the professions of early Ireland were isolated from each other and had little knowledge of the province of other professions has waned in the face of criticism.¹²³ Another idea has arisen to take its place; namely, the ‘mandarin class’ theory of intellectual activity in early Christian Ireland. This theory stated simply that, as the *literati* were all educated in the monastery schools, they could not have been totally differentiated from one another in their learning. This perhaps implies that the education they received was eclectic, or what would in modern terms be called ‘interdisciplinary’. In any event, the main focus of education was to prepare élite individuals to enter a literate class and maintain the position and integrity of that class. This took place against a backdrop of dynastic struggles and fluctuating fortunes among the leading families.¹²⁴ The ‘mandarins’ played a part in those dynastic struggles, on paper as well as on the battle-field. This is especially clear in the genealogies and the origin legends which these men prepared for those who supported them.¹²⁵ Scholarly activity is nowadays focused upon this very interaction between the dynasties and the ‘mandarins’.

On the other hand, the older analysis of this interaction still has explanatory power. The fact that portions of early Irish law were written in a text-book format and clearly were intended to instruct students in the law, suggests that some scholars may have had a more specialised knowledge of the law than of, for instance, poetic forms. Another suggestive point in favour of the ‘specialist’ theory is the fact that early Irish law posed difficulties not only in understanding the rules of the law, but also linguistically. The canonical sections of early Irish law are written in early Old Irish, and careful study was needed even to understand the earlier material at the verbal level.

Moreover, even in the earlier period the professional functions were clearly differentiated. A poet was different from a judge, who was different from a scribe. This differentiation would not have been so clean-cut if there was only one monolithic class of ‘literary’ men. This does not mean, of course, that the branches of learning were not connected in principle, but that

¹²³Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 22–28.

¹²⁴T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘The Context and Uses of Literacy in Early Christian Ireland’, in Huw Pryce, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 70–75.

¹²⁵David E. Thornton, ‘Orality, Literacy and Genealogy in Early Medieval Ireland and Wales’, in Huw Pryce, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 87–93.

specialisation had occurred prior to the period of written literature in Ireland.¹²⁶ As is shown in Chapters 3 and 4, those who wrote literature did indeed have knowledge of early Irish law but it was relatively superficial, and suited to the understanding of a lay audience and the plot of a particular story. The wisdom literature, on the other hand, displays a highly nuanced understanding of the law and its implications, especially the Triads and Heptads. This nuanced competency in wisdom and the law indicates that a lawyer's hand was involved in writing them. The continuing interest in law and wisdom displayed by Giolla na Naomh mac Duinn Shléibhe mhic Aodhagáin in his thirteenth century instructional poem, which itself could be considered a manifestation of wisdom literature, argues an audience with an active interest in the wisdom literature as an adjunct to the law.¹²⁷ This later interest, when coupled with the legalistic Triads and Heptads from the early period, suggests a more organic relationship between wisdom and the law than has previously been acknowledged.

2.4 Fíthal in Irish Wisdom Literature

In the first instance, Fíthal was indeed a wisdom figure; to his students and to those who read the words attributed to him he taught legal wisdom, a very specific form of wisdom. His credentials as a wisdom figure were secured in several ways. He was featured in an instructional piece and in what seems from what little is left of it to have been a legal text. Once he started to appear in less strictly legal contexts, other attributes that were associated in a more general way with wisdom accrued to him. This made him appear like the wisdom figures represented in other texts. The authors of these texts wished to create a Fíthal who was more in conformity with other representatives of this type of literary figure. In essence, the authors of the tales massaged Fíthal's character until it lost most of its legal features and assimilated other traits that were associated more generally with learned characters in early Irish literature. However, he never fully lost his connection to the law. Thus, by the end of the Middle Irish period, although he could still be the judge to Cormac mac Airt and would always appear in that capacity, he had come to resemble any other learned figure in the literature.

As noted above and demonstrated in chapter 3 and 4, while the more generalised figure of Fíthal is often shown in the position of a wise man who is learned in all the esoteric arts, there is considerable uncertainty in regard to the wisdom literature attributed to him by name. Colin Ireland, in his edition of *Bríathra Flainn Fína maic Ossu*, argued that the text was a Middle Irish conflation and that its association with Fíthal (it was named the *Senbríathra Fíthail* in

¹²⁶Some earlier scholars detected a direct lineage from the Druids in ancient Gaul, as described by Caesar, to the literate men of early Ireland. While there are enough parallels to make this an interesting idea, there is not enough evidence at present to sustain it.

¹²⁷Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, 'An Address to a Student of Law', in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, eds., *Sages, Saints, and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989).

the Book of Leinster) was a secondary development.¹²⁸ The only copies of *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*, which made the association with Fíthal, were copies of, or were somehow connected with, the Book of Leinster.¹²⁹ On this reading of the evidence, the identification of Fíthal with *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* could have originated in the Book of Leinster. Since Fíthal makes a number of appearances within that book, an unknown redactor or scribe may have decided to give Fíthal a wisdom text that did not require training in the law, one which had previously been ascribed to Flann Fína. This attribution may have been the source of the confusion which led later scribes often to associate wisdom texts with Fíthal or Cormac mac Airt on a random basis.¹³⁰

The only surviving piece of wisdom literature with an explicit and early attribution to Fíthal is the *Finnśruth Fíthail*, detailed in Chapter 3, which is specifically of legal origin. This raises the question how Fíthal made the transition from law to literature. The legal texts contain the earliest known references to Fíthal; the first non-legal reference is found in the poetic dialogue between Cormac and Fíthal (see Chapter 5). This dialogue is the earliest text that connects these two characters, and may have acted as a bridge between the purely legal image of Fíthal and his later incarnation as an all-purpose wisdom figure. In that case, the dialogue would have given shape or form to subsequent literature, and set the parameters of Fíthal's character as it would appear to the authors of later centuries. If this poem gained a wide currency, the picture of Fíthal in the minds of later authors would have been sharpened by the actions and character given to Fíthal within the poem. His legal origins and background were re-asserted by connecting him to Cormac mac Airt, giving him a stronger and more concrete character than might have been available before. This connection also placed Fíthal in a definite chronological era, putting him within the important period between the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and the coming of St Patrick. In this setting, Fíthal became connected with the burgeoning Fenian tales and other literary compositions of the Early Modern period. Even later, in a re-crafting of a Fenian tale, Fíthal is given a new identity as the half-brother of Finn (see Section 3.10 and Section 4.2.2). The author of *Duanaire Finn* XLIII followed the author of *Acallam na Senórach*, who seems to have been attempting to incorporate Fíthal into a larger Fenian tradition. However, the author of *Duanaire Finn* XLIII attempted to soften these assertions, perhaps he felt his audience might not accept Fíthal as a fully-fledged Fenian character. Since Fíthal was not a major character, like Finn or Cormac mac Airt, authors and redactors probably felt that they could re-cast or re-deploy Fíthal with a freer hand than they could use with better-known characters.

Most of the literature relating to Fíthal, however, is no longer extant, which places the

¹²⁸Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), p. 52.

¹²⁹Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 28–31.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 43.

modern scholar at a disadvantage when attempting to estimate the impact of Fíthal within Irish literature. In contrast to ‘first-order’ figures such as Cú Chulainn, Fíthal has low visibility. He remains, with the exception of one poem, in the realm of the intellectual classes, and, when pressed into service in the more popular literature, he is an obscure and characterless figure who supports and advises his king on matters of law, tradition, and supernatural occurrence but has no individual personality. In this guise, he projects only the aura which attaches to wisdom figures in general.

Thus, Fíthal seems to have begun his mythological career among those who studied the law. Once the dialogue featuring Fíthal and Cormac mac Airt was in circulation, subsequent authors had a more widely accessible starting-point from which to work. Henceforth, Fíthal was firmly attached to Cormac mac Airt and proceeded from there to Finn and his warrior-band. He remained firmly associated this period of pseudo-history even when other authors attempted to stretch his career into the time of St Patrick, a period of over one hundred years after the traditional date of the death of Cormac mac Airt, or to move him farther away from Cormac mac Airt and furnish him with a more adventurous Fenian career. He made his final appearance in traditional literature in Keating’s *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (circa 1634) as an upholder of the moral order in ancient Ireland. Interestingly, Keating knew him both as a wisdom figure giving instruction to his son and as an early lawyer (see Section 3.12).¹³¹

The relationship of Fíthal to *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* is a vexing one. Colin Ireland has asserted that the two were first connected in the Book of Leinster and that the association passed from there into other manuscripts. He describes it as a Middle Irish conflation, and constructs a theory to explain why this conflation occurred. He argues that three texts relevant to this issue appear in the Book of Leinster: *Tecosca Cormaic*, *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail*, and *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*. The compilers of the Book of Leinster were aware of Fíthal and Cormac, and of their status as wisdom figures. This was especially true of Cormac mac Airt, whose instructions on how to rule as a king were widely known. It seems that there was also a sense of balance at work. Given that the compilers of the Book of Leinster would have known, through the *Immacallam*, that Fíthal was a considerable wisdom figure, the scribe copying *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* may have assigned the text to Fíthal in order to balance Fíthal and Cormac. He could have done this because Aldfrith of Northumbria was a historical person and was known to be one by the Book of Leinster scribe, whereas all the other wisdom texts in Irish were attributed to mythological personages. These considerations may have caused the scribe of the *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* to reassign the text so that Cormac and Fíthal were given equal status in the eyes of the reader.

There would seem to be weaknesses in this theory, both in its account of the relationship(s) between the Book of Leinster and the other MSS of the L-recensions, and in the role and

¹³¹Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. xiii.

motivation it assigns to the person(s) who suppressed Flan Fína in favour of Fíthal. Yet such interference with wisdom texts was not uncommon in Ireland or elsewhere. They may have occurred because the redactors or scribes, especially in the early period, felt themselves to be part of the wisdom tradition and wise men themselves. Later, as these texts ossified into canon, changes were less frequent or radical.

To sum up, for the early period of Irish literature, Fíthal was a legendary judge to whom was assigned an instructional dialogue. This provided the basis for his literary function as a wisdom figure for judges and lawyers. From having this role in legal literature, Fíthal developed the persona of a more general wisdom figure. This development was precipitated by the appearance of the poetic dialogue featuring himself and Cormac mac Airt. The poetic dialogue seemed to stimulate further writing about Fíthal in his connection with Cormac. The outcome of this was his exposure to a wider audience than previously. But even with this increased attention from tale and saga writers, he was a minor figure in comparison with other literary characters who flourished against the backdrop of Ireland's pre-historic past.

2.5 Conclusion

As we have seen, wisdom literature is embedded within the human experience. From the Universal forms of wisdom literature which appear in all cultures across the world to the specific stock characters and advice, wisdom literature is a fundamental experience within human culture. Given those universal modes of expression, the acceptance of Christianity and the books of wisdom contained within the Bible nevertheless changed the way in which wisdom was perceived in the late Roman Empire. By the time Christianity arrived in Ireland, the teaching of the Fathers, the various synods, and councils of the Church had developed a coherent theology and wisdom. Into this complex world of belief, the new Irish Christians entered with little fore-warning, despite evidence of some contemporary exposure to the developments taking place in late antique Europe. The Christianisation of Irish society was not without repercussions on the continent. As is well documented, the Irish clerics made contributions toward all the ecclesiastical controversies of the day. They often did so in highly informed ways, which suggests that they were well connected to the infrastructure of learning in the medieval Western Church. The effect of this integration upon the traditional wisdom already extant within Ireland was profound.

The methods pre-literate of transmitting and recording wisdom literature inherited by the Irish were doubtless similar to those attested in other cultures. Scholars today may speculate about the oral phases and 'original' sources of wisdom literature in pre-literate societies, but wherever it penetrated, literacy triggered a fundamental shift in the understanding of, access to, and analysis of pre-existing traditions and 'literary' material. Characters, events, and mythology

changed in nature from that of the malleable oral artefact to that of a piece of the physical material of a culture. In the Irish context, this change was brought about by the arrival of Christianity with its intellectual and cultural world-view. These novelties affected the way in which wisdom literature was conceived by the Irish. While the forms of the older wisdom literature were kept, as they were still relevant to a Christian audience, the literacy that came with the new faith created the environment within which the older forms were recorded in writing. The new medium moulded the wisdom literature, as it moulded other sorts of literature recorded at the time. The pre-Christian wisdom figures were kept but were shaped in a Christian mould centred on the ideal medieval king, a form of wisdom literature which was popular on the continent in the early Middle Ages and derived ultimately from the Old Testament.¹³² This perception of Cormac as the ideal medieval king pervades the wisdom literature attributed to him. Not only does he inform his son on the fine art of ruling, but he does so in the Christian context of ‘worship the great God’ and with other allusions to the new faith. This synthesis of old and new may have been intended to capture the aura of pre-Christian and ancient knowledge while simultaneously orienting the wisdom discretely towards the new faith. To receive the new wisdom, the reader would have to turn towards the Bible, with its own book of Proverbs, the New Testament, and saints’ lives.

The importance of the Irish wisdom literature is hard to gauge. The small overall number of extant wisdom texts could suggest that wisdom literature was relatively unimportant within the literary output of early Ireland. Sagas and hagiography provide a far greater proportion of the literature. But a purely numerically based estimate of influence is problematic for two reasons.¹³³ First, it does not take account of the number of copies of a given text which disseminated that original text throughout Ireland. Second, it does not take into consideration the influence that a literary form may have had, even if there was only one famous instance of the form in question. In Ireland, the learned poets continued to refer to wisdom literature in their compositions even though no new wisdom literature was created after Aldfrith of Northumbria. This may coincide with a postulated decline in originality in the poetic orders in the period following the reforms of the twelfth century.¹³⁴ It also argues for a long stability in regard to the use and availability of the wisdom literature for the élite classes of society. At more popular levels, however, the extant literature is meagre on account of the monopoly in regard to literacy exercised by the learned classes. In contrast to the exclusivity of the poetic schools stands the work of the early Irish lawyers. While the poets’ reflection of wisdom literature was found in *exempla* and motifs in their praise poetry, the lawyers’ interaction with

¹³²For the introduction of Old Testament anointment ceremony to medieval France, see Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara, and Soissons* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1985), pp. 107–162.

¹³³For discussion, see Thomas O’Loughlin, ‘The Diffusion of Adombán’s *De Locis Sanctis* in the Medieval Period’, *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 93–95.

¹³⁴Damian Bracken, *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).

the wisdom literature was more pervasive, as shown by the integration of legal literature directly into wisdom literature. While the direction of transmission is not always known, it is clear that wisdom literature and the law were closely interconnected. The compatibility of law and earthly wisdom could have been produced simply by similar qualities inherent in the two genres. Both wisdom and law are primarily concerned with the smooth functioning of society. While the law binds and enforces, wisdom provides instructions for the best way to live within the system and the best way to interact with the system in one's lifetime. The interaction of the two genres helps us to understand why judges were considered to be wise and were seen as the keepers of the collective wisdom of society in its highest form.

The study of early Irish wisdom literature is challenging for two main reasons. First, wisdom literature in general has a tendency to cultivate a terse, laconic style; wisdom that is pithy and compressed is memorable. This is particularly true of the Irish material on account of its close association with the legal tradition, where the mnemonic, aphoristic mode was equally important.¹³⁵ The other main challenge is provided by the attitude and practice of those who copied the texts. Whether they were influenced by orality or by the self-image of the scribe-editors,¹³⁶ these texts show a degree of verbal mutability that disables the normal methods of textual criticism.

The wisdom literature of Ireland came into contact with the Biblical and Classical traditions and was radically changed by the experience. While the authors and scribes of the literature were careful to integrate the new faith into the wisdom literature, the structure of early Irish society had not yet changed to that of an urban environment. The Church, with its roots in the urbanised Roman Empire did, however, adapt its structure to the Irish situation. The Church's policy of aggrandisement of kings was unaffected by the new situation and fitted very well into early Irish life as the metropolitan structure was adapted to the rural environment.¹³⁷ This meant that the earlier wisdom tradition was still readily applicable in Christianised Irish society. While the texts changed in detail as a function of scribal activity, structural change was not attempted where there was no need. Even wisdom texts ascribed to historical persons were firmly embedded within the traditional rural, pastoral society.

When Irish wisdom literature is compared to that of more urbanised cultures, such as the late Antique Roman Empire and Ancient Egypt, the urban and bureaucratic nature of those societies is easily demonstrated. early Irish society was 'familiar', as D. A. Binchy stated,¹³⁸

¹³⁵Compare, Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1972), pp. 99–115.

¹³⁶T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Context and Uses of Literacy in Early Christian Ireland', in Huw Pryce, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 71–73.

¹³⁷Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organization in Ireland A. D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999), pp. 168–171.

¹³⁸D. A. Binchy, 'Secular Institutions', in Myles Dillon, ed., *Early Irish Society* (Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1954).

and this is reflected in the wisdom literature wherever there is mention of connections between people, perceptions of power, the emphasis on good husbandry, and good marriage.¹³⁹ The legal system is also reflected in both Irish and continental traditions. In the more urban continental tradition, appearing polished in the court room and the use of proper etiquette in front of officials are emphasised. In the Irish tradition, correct social relations and upholding contracts are emphasised. These differences reflect the natures of the urbanised and the still-rural societies.

Within these differing contexts, Fíthal duly makes his appearance. As shown above, judges and wisdom literature in Ireland are related and it is not at all surprising that Fíthal should have had wisdom literature attached to him. This association was so strong that it caused a wisdom text not originally attributed to him to be attributed to him. The transformation of *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* into *Senbríathra Fíthail* was undertaken in part to maintain the mythological context to the wisdom literature and in part because, as Fíthal became a more generalised wisdom figure, the absence of a generalised wisdom text attributed to him would have become apparent. In this way, with his name attached to a specific wisdom text, Fíthal became a wisdom figure of more universal import. Fíthal's connection to the new faith was tenuous at best. He received one reference in the commentary on the Pseudo-Historical Prologue of the *Senchas Már* (PHP) (see Section 3.8); but this reference seems to have been an afterthought on the part of the scribe, and it was only in the Middle Irish period that Fíthal was securely attached to the PHP and thus connected to St Patrick and the reform of early Irish law. Fíthal's connection to traditional Irish wisdom literature is obvious, since the content of his wisdom is suffused with references to early Irish society and law, notwithstanding the attribution of *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* to him.

The production of early Irish wisdom literature was a recognised department of activity on the part of the *literati* in early Irish society. This duty seems to have fallen most heavily upon those in the legal profession, for reasons that included the close link between wisdom literature and the concerns and teaching of the law. The lawyer's focus upon the human dimensions corresponds well to the earthly nature of the Irish wisdom tradition and indeed, for all the Book of Proverbs' attestations to the contrary, to the nature of wisdom literature in all societies. The learned poets' interaction with the wisdom literature seems to have arisen because they cultivated it, especially in the later period, as a source of allusions to include in praise poetry. It was not that the poets had no interest in wisdom as such; on the contrary, they were considered dispensers of wisdom by profession. However, given the large amount of legal material contained in the wisdom literature of Ireland, it seems likeliest that those who were entrusted with the law were especially strongly connected with the wisdom literature.

In conclusion, the three threads we have identified in the wisdom literature of Ireland (the

¹³⁹For instance, see Section 3.5 and Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 1.42, 2.2, 5.20, 5.22, 6.49, 6.59, 6.87, 6.91.

Universal, the Biblical/Classical, and the Irish) serve as valuable metaphors, while genetic explanations for the transmission of motifs are no longer fashionable. An example of the interplay between the three phenomena is the effect that the Bible and, in this case, especially the Old Testament, had upon the later Classical world and societies of the Middle Ages in Europe. Each of the three threads interacts with and exercises a pull on the other threads. Thus Biblical style affected the expression of universal wisdom themes, while at the same time changing the content and form of the native, culture-specific wisdom extant in Ireland prior to its arrival. The 'Irish' thread contributed content and relevance to people in Irish society. The 'Universal' thread contributed the forms within which wisdom would be delivered in Ireland as elsewhere. It moulded the Book of Proverbs, as it did the 'Irish' thread. Thus the coming together of human, native and exotic elements enriched and instructed the early Irish.

While this chapter has explored the underlying sources of early Irish wisdom literature, the next chapters contain detailed discussion of the prose and verse references to Fíthal which comprise the heart of the thesis. Each such occurrence is examined in an extended fashion with the aim of showing the subtle re-workings of the image of the law in successive treatments of Fíthal.

Chapter 3

Fíthal in Prose

This is the first of two chapters which catalogues and describes the literary manifestations of Fíthal. This particular chapter focuses on the prose texts which contain references to Fíthal. While distinction of forms, types, and styles of literature is largely an artificial modern phenomenon, the prose-poetry distinction is useful in this instance as it allows for a cleaner presentation of the material.¹ Chapter 4 contains all references to Fíthal in poetry.

This work has been started by Colin Ireland in his edition of *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*; this is work which this chapter extends and expands.² The goal of the chapter is to catalogue all the references to Fíthal currently known in early Irish prose literature and gain a fuller appreciation for Fíthal's role in these texts. This examination will provide detailed evidence for the argument that Fíthal was used by different authors for a developing range of purposes. Most often, he was used to introduce a legal element to a tale, sometimes for dramatic impact and sometimes for the author to demonstrate esoteric and legal knowledge to his audience. In some cases Fíthal became a mere cipher, and his role was simply a device to release the main characters from impasses and move the plot forward by feats of judgement.

The discussion of the texts that appear in the next two chapters comprises: (1) a general introduction to each text in which Fíthal appears, including a summary of the plot, a discussion of previous scholarship on the text, its main features and manuscript provenance; (2) an examination of Fíthal in the context of the text, and (3) a discussion of how it relates to early Irish law and Fíthal's place in early Irish literature. There are only three sources that do not conform to this outline: one is a very late printed source (see Section 3.11), one is extremely old (see Section 3.13), and one has such limited context that extended analysis is impossible (see Section 3.14).

¹For traditional categorisation of the material, see Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980), pp. 20–32.

²Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 48–52.

3.1 Decision as to Cormac's Sword

The 'Decision as to Cormac's Sword'³ is attached to the end of a set of tales which focus on the acts of Cormac mac Airt, High King of Ireland, and the judge Morann.⁴ Our tale, while given a separate title by the medieval editor, is not presented separately, but is at the end of the section commonly known as *Echtra Cormaic i Tír Tairngiri*.⁵

The first few paragraphs tell of the 'councils and festivals of Ireland', giving information on where and when they were held (*dindsenchas*). This is followed by a description of the 'peace of Cormac' during which killing was permitted only at eight designated areas in Ireland. Fíthal's makes his first appearance when the author introduces the tradition of *Saltair Cormaic*.⁶ According to this text, all the wise men of Ireland, including Fintan and Fíthal, who were singled out for special reference by the author, record the historical traditions of Ireland for the first time. The combination of Fintan and Fíthal also appears in *Bruiden na hAlmaine*, giving the appearance of a continued textual motif, which is explored below. The tale changes focus at this point from Fíthal to one of his sons, Socht, and his genealogy is given. The focal point of the story, a sword in Socht's possession, is introduced and the special properties of the sword are delineated, with Socht claiming that it was Cú Chulainn's own sword. Dubdrenn, the steward of Tara, attempts to purchase the sword from Socht, who refuses to sell it because he is not allowed to sell his father's (Fíthal's) treasure while he still lives. Socht is correct as per early Irish law in this instance. As his father is still alive and he has not inherited his land, he is permanently cast as a *fer midboth* 'a man of middle huts', which constrains his legal actions until his inheritance.⁷ This does not satisfy Dubdrenn, who persists in his attempts to acquire the sword from Socht. Finally, Dubdrenn invites Socht to drink with him and he plies Socht with drink until he passes out. Dubdrenn then steals the sword and takes it to a smith, and has the smith engrave his name on the inside of the pommel where it meets the blade. He then returns the sword to Socht's side while he is still unconscious. Instead of directly suing for the sword, Dubdrenn bides his time for three months, pestering Socht for the sword. Only then does Dubdrenn finally sue for the sword claiming that it is truly his.

The procedure for beginning a law suit in early Irish law is briefly addressed before progressing to the rest of the tale. The only detail given is '... [he] fulfilled all the requirements of

³Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', in *Irische Texte*, vol. 3, no. 1, ed. by Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1891) 185–202, 203–229.

⁴For the Christian reflex of these stories, see Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), p. 101.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 156–157.

⁶For a later reflection of this tradition, see Section 3.3.3.

⁷Neil McLeod, 'Interpreting Early Irish Law: Status and Currency, Part II', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 42 (1987), pp. 59–65. See also Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 82–83.

the suit, and declared that the sword was his own, and that it was taken from him.⁸ The second half of the description of the beginning of the law suit corresponds to the public declaration of an offence, the *aidbriud* 'assertion'.⁹ The author leaves it unclear, however, what the requirements of the suit involve. As the tale itself moves quickly to the interrogation of witnesses, the requirements of the suit may refer to choosing one of the five paths of judgement and binding the pledges and sureties necessary for pleading before the court can begin.¹⁰

Before pleading begins, however, Socht consults with his father, Fíthal. Stokes's text and translation are as follows:

Luidh Socht do agallaim Fithil 7 do fochmarc a dhala imon caingin sin, 7 do thobairt a athar leis do cosnum in claidib. "Nítho," ol Fithil, 'imodcuri fein it [d]alaibh 7 ni ba m[i]si itercertbus duid tria bhithu, ol is mor nodcuri 7 nodgabai fein id dhalaib, 7 ni firindi gan gáí do rad. Friscoirter gai in gáí. Raiged immorro, arrocú leat do imdemna sealbai in claidib is asalim fuaidridh do cur.'¹¹

Socht went to consult Fithel and to request him to take part in that action, and to bring his father to defend [his claim to] the sword. "No," says Fithel: "act for thyself in thy causes. It is not I who will ever arbitrate for thee, for greatly dost thou put thyself and take thyself(?) in thy causes; and (it is) not to say truth without falsehood. Falsehood is opposed in falsehood..."¹²

This portion of the text is difficult and Stokes's treatment is not wholly satisfactory. We therefore supply some additional notes.¹³

At the start of the passage, Fíthal may be telling Socht to conduct the case himself (taking *imodcuri* as representing 2 sing. imperative of *immot-chuirthe* 'deploy yourself' from *immo-cuirethar*) and refusing to act himself on the grounds that Socht has ample experience of conducting such cases (taking *nodcuri 7 nodgabai* as representing 2 sing. indicatives *not-chuiri* and *not-gaibi* and assuming that these verbs, literally 'you put/throw yourself' and 'you take/hold yourself', are being used idiomatically to express two aspects of pleading, such as 'claiming' and 'responding'. Fíthal's next words may mean something like: 'And it is not

⁸Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', p. 219, §65.

⁹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 190.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹¹Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', pp. 200–201, §66.

¹²Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', pp. 219, §66.

¹³I am grateful to Professor Gillies for discussing the interpretation of the passage with me.

truth/justice [merely] to not speak falsehood; falsehood is [best] opposed in falsehood.' (See DIL F 425.82–3)

The latter part of the passage, not translated by Stokes, can perhaps be taken as follows:

Raiged/ragaid immorro; ar-rócur leat do imdén[um] sealbai in c[h]laidib. Is asa lim fuaidri[u]dh do c[h]jur.

This may tentatively be translated as follows:

I shall go (sc. to the adjudication), however. I can make a statement with you to furnish proof of the ownership of the sword. I deem it easier to raise a counter-suit.

(See DIL T 127.17-23 for *raiged* and *ragaid* as MI forms of 1 sing. future of *téit*. We suggest reading *ar-rócur* (*arrocur* in MSS) and taking it as 1 sing. present of *ar-fócair* with infixed *ro* of ability. See DIL I 85.3-5 for a different interpretation of the reading *indemna* (for which, however, *indenma* seems at least as plausible in the on-line version of BB); but see id., s.v. *imm-déni* and *imdénam* for the more apposite meaning gained by the suggested emendation. For *fúaitriud* see DIL F 454.17-19 for this reading and interpretation.)

The text now passes to the pleading itself. In accordance with a procedure of early Irish law, Socht gives an oath of rebuttal, *díthech* or *díthach* 'swearing away', asserting in the presence of Cormac that the sword was a family treasure. It is unclear at this point in the story whether Fíthal is also present. Dubdrenn then accuses Socht of perjury, *éthech*. Cormac asks for proof of this and Dubdrenn explains that his name is hidden in the hilt of the sword, which is duly fetched and opened. Upon discovering Dubdrenn's name in the hilt, Socht disavows the sword and its liabilities, assigning them to Dubdrenn. This wording is crucial to Socht's plan. Dubdrenn accepts the sword and its liabilities, after which Socht turns the tables on Dubdrenn by stating that the sword was found in his grandfather's neck with no clue as to who put it there until Dubdrenn's suit for the sword. Socht then asks for a judgement from Cormac, who decrees that the liabilities on the sword are greater than its value, and assesses seven *cumals* for the slaying, together with restitution of the sword to Socht. At this point, seeing that their ruse has failed, Dubdrenn and the smith admit their deception and are assessed seven *cumals* each for their part in it. Cormac then identifies the sword as Cú Chulainn's own sword and claims that his grandfather, Conn, was slain with it by Tíbraite Tírech, King of Ulster. Cormac confers with Fíthal, who may well have been present at the proceedings, though the author does not clarify this, and the sword is then given to Cormac. Possibly, the story's title ought not be 'the Decision as to Cormac's Sword' but 'How Cormac Stole Fíthal's Sword'.

3.1.1 Previous Scholarship

Previous scholarship has tended to focus on *Echtra Cormaic i Tír Tairngiri* which precedes the text discussed here. The scholarship concerning *Echtra Cormaic i Tír Tairngiri* has mostly advocated the pagan or Christian quality of the tale. Kim McCone uses it to bolster his argument for an essentially Christian allegory embedded in the tale.¹⁴ Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, on the other hand, identifies the story as part of Cormac mac Airt's International Heroic Biography,¹⁵ which would suggest that the story is essentially pre-Christian and based on international motifs. Fergus Kelly uses the story to discuss ordeals in early Irish law without reference to the pagan/Christian debate.¹⁶ Colin Ireland addresses the story in his edition of Aldfrith of Northumbria's wisdom, using it to illustrate Fíthal's passive character in the stories in which he appears.¹⁷ Damian McManus cites this tale in his *A Guide to Ogam* in relation to the use of Ogam for identifying ownership of land and objects.¹⁸

3.1.2 The Text

Whitley Stokes' introduction to his edition of the text, which forms the basis established that the tale is found in two sources: the Yellow Book of Lecan (TCD MS H.2.16 (= 1318)) and the Book of Ballymote (RIA MS 23 P 12). In addition, a partial copy, which contains only the *Echtra Cormaic i Tír Tairngiri*, is found in the Book of Fermoy (RIA MS 23 E 29), and the *Transactions of the Ossianic Society* contains has a modern version of the same episode. Neither of these later texts need concern us.¹⁹ Stokes concluded that versions in the Book of Ballymote and the Yellow Book of Lecan are derived from the same source material, and although he does not give any direct evidence for this assertion, this appears to be the case.²⁰

The two manuscripts which contain our section, the Book of Ballymote and the Yellow Book of Lecan, are major sources of Irish traditional material. The Book of Ballymote is thought to have been written circa 1391–1399 by three scribes: Robeartus Mac Sithigh, Solamh Ó Droma, and Maghnus Ó Duibhgeannáin, who worked as a team on the manuscript.²¹ Ballymote is located in Co. Sligo. The Yellow Book of Lecan was written circa 1391–1401, also in Co.

¹⁴Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 155–160.

¹⁵Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), pp. 80–85.

¹⁶Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 209–211.

¹⁷Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 49–50.

¹⁸Damian McManus, *A Guide to Ogam* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1991), p. 164.

¹⁹*Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, vol. 3, pp. 212–228.

²⁰Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', pp. 183–4.

²¹Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'The Book of Ballymote', *Celtica* 14 (1981), p. 15.

Sligo.²² We thus have a northern Connacht provenance for the tale. The main hand for the Yellow Book of Lecan was Giolla Íosa, who was also the main hand for the Great Book of Lecan, and Dubháilach mac Séamuis, who was also known as Dubháilach Óg and was probably the student of Giolla Íosa, assisted him in the writing.²³ This strong association with the Northern tradition of scribal activity could extend to the authorship of the tale, which could in that case reflect Uí Néill propaganda for the high kingship of Ireland.²⁴

Our text occurs in the Book of Ballymote from page 260^b to 263^b. Robeartus Mac Sithigh possibly wrote this portion of the manuscript, but as Mac Sithigh's hand is particularly close to that of Solamh Ó Droma, an exact identification of the scribe would need closer consideration than can be attempted here.²⁵ The version of the story from the Yellow Book of Lecan runs from columns 889 to 898.

With regard to language, Fergus Kelly, in his discussion of the styles of ordeals in early Ireland, categorises this story as late Old Irish,²⁶ presumably on the basis of the use of *atbert-som* with the singular masculine pronoun in §59, the correct use of *dognít[h]er* and *doberar* §67, *asbert* §68, *congairther* §71, *asbert* §74, etc. This seems unexceptional.

3.1.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

In the portion of the text which introduces the main characters portrayed, Fíthal, with Fintan and the other wise men of Ireland, attend Cormac at a meeting to write, not the laws of the Irish, but the history of the Irish. Here, Fíthal is not so much a poet and judge as an historian. This modification has important consequences for our understating of how Fíthal was viewed by the Irish tradition, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Once the author settles his focus on Socht as the main character, Fíthal's role within the text is defined. He functions both as an adviser to his son and as a judge, adjudicating his son's case and ultimately determining who owns the sword. We assume that Fíthal is present, though this, as noted above, is unclear from the tale itself. His apparent passivity, if one may risk seeming to inject modern concerns into an early Irish tale, could reflect the fact that he had to balance his familial role and his duties as a judge in a case which included both his sword and his son. Another feature of the episode is the way in which Fíthal gives advice to his son. 'Friscoirter gai in gai' is the critical phrase. After telling Socht that he will not plead his case for him, Fíthal tells Socht to counter Dubdrenn's lie with a lie of his own. Socht's certainty about his ownership of the sword protects him from Dubdrenn's intentions. This is, in fact, what Socht does to win

²²Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'Scríobhaithe Leacáin Mhic Fhir Bhrisigh', *Celtica* 19 (1987), pp. 141–142.

²³Ibid., pp. 141–145.

²⁴For a discussion of the Uí Néill and the high kingship of Ireland, see T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 481–488.

²⁵Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'The Book of Ballymote', *Celtica* 14 (1981), p. 15.

²⁶Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 210.

the return of his sword. Of course, neither Socht nor Fíthal were to know that Cormac would use a similar tactic to take the sword for himself.

3.1.4 Discussion

There are several interesting aspects of this tale from the viewpoint of early Irish law. First, Socht is described as a *gíall* 'hostage' of Cormac.²⁷ Hostages were an integral part of the early Irish political system, and hence figure in the legal tracts. Normally, they were used to enforce treaties involving *túatha* and as a means of displaying political power.²⁸ If the relationship of Cormac to Fíthal was as close as it seems to have been in the literature, it is interesting that Cormac would keep one of Fíthal's sons hostage. Equally, it does not seem to stop Fíthal from confronting Cormac when he perceives a wrong committed against him (see Chapter 5).

Socht's legal relationship with his father was superficially explored earlier; however, there are two components to Socht's legal disability as a *fer midboth*. First, as a *macc béo-athar* 'son of a living father', he has no control over his own life even if he is an adult.²⁹ Second, because his father is still living, he cannot progress up the ladder to the higher grades of freemen beyond *fer midboth*. While being a *macc béo-athar* limits him significantly, the status of *fer midboth* does give him a certain liberty to act independently of his father, especially where contracts are involved. Thus he has the power to dissolve his father's disadvantageous contracts and any contract that adversely affects his inheritance.³⁰ But as these powers do not extend beyond contractual adjustment, his ability to take substantive action is severely restricted; in particular, he is legally unable to sell the sword to Dubdrenn. This legal detail is used by the author to drive the plot.

With the sale of the sword precluded, Dubdrenn concocts a plan to use the law to obtain his desire. To expedite this plan he enlists the help of the smith, though it seems strange that the smith would agree so quickly to such an obviously illegal plan without any reward for himself. *Bretha im Gatta*, 'judgements concerning theft', which survives only in fragmentary form,³¹ states that the compensation for theft is twice the value of the object.³² Although it is heavily influenced by Christian-derived ideas,³³ *Bretha im Gatta* contains the most direct evidence for the law concerning theft in early Ireland. The law on theft considers not only the value of the

²⁷Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', §58, p. 199.

²⁸Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 173–176.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 161–162.

³¹Vernam Hull, 'Bretha im Gatta', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 25 (1956).

³²Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 147.

³³See Marilyn Gerriets, 'Theft, Penitentials, and the Compilation of the Early Irish Laws', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 18–32 and Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984), pp. 439–59.

object but also the status of the owner. If the item is on loan or has been given to a person of higher status for safe keeping, this is also taken into account.³⁴

Dubdrenn uses the fact that his name was engraved on the hilt of the sword as evidence of ownership, with the corollary that Socht has perjured himself. The evidence produced by Dubdrenn is accepted by every character in the tale, but the early Irish law tracts are not clear on the treatment of evidence produced in this way. The focus of the law was upon evidence gained from witnesses and the protagonists in the case itself. For instance, Socht gave an oath of denial when the case began. It would seem from this tale, and allowing for the fact that we lack rules covering physical evidence in early Irish law, that physical evidence was accepted without critical scrutiny of the one offering the evidence. In such circumstances, the oaths of witnesses, which were compounded by their honour-price, were more important than any physical evidence that could be presented. A person's status in society determined the weight of oaths and evidence. A person in a superior position to another could change the outcome of a court case; thus *fortach*, 'over-swearing', was a powerful weapon to wield in court.³⁵ The author of this tale does not explicitly take into consideration the honour-prices of the two contenders for the sword. We therefore have to rely on guesswork to gauge the possible impact of this factor on the unfolding of the story. First, as the law texts do not dwell on the status of the King of Ireland, a determination as to the status of Dubdrenn in relation to his king is not possible. The steward normally had an honour-price equal to half that of his employer. If Cormac had an honour-price of fourteen *cumals*, which is the highest honour-price for a king given in the laws, Dubdrenn's honour-price would have been seven *cumals*, or the honour-price of a king of one *tuath*. Second, given Socht's position as a *fer midboth*, he would have had an honour-price of one *dairt*, 'yearling heifer'. On these assumptions, Dubdrenn could clearly have over-sworn Socht as to the validity of the evidence he presented. This, and the fact that early Irish law does not contain provision for physical evidence, could explain why our author did not lay any stress on Dubdrenn's presentation of the sword as definitive evidence, and could equally explain why Socht acquiesces so quickly when Dubdrenn presents his evidence.

Once the truth concerning Dubdrenn's treachery is revealed, Cormac decrees seven *cumals* from both the smith and Dubdrenn. According to *Bretha im Gatta*, however, seven *cumals* is would only be partially correct. As this was a theft in Cormac's house, the honour-price of the king should have been paid, along with two-thirds of the honour-price of the person from whom the item was stolen, i. e. *Fíthal*, in as much as Socht merely possessed the sword but did not own it because of his legal disability.³⁶ If we assume that *Fíthal* was the highest form of judge, his honour-price would have been fifteen *séts*,³⁷ and, the total amount due would be

³⁴Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 147–149.

³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 198–202.

³⁶Vernam Hull, 'Bretha im Gatta', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 25 (1956), p. 221.

³⁷Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 52.

seven *cumals* and ten *séts*.

Socht's attempt to obtain the sword after Dubdrenn revealed his own name in the hilt of the sword is a further anomaly. The proceedings before Cormac and Fíthal concerned only the alleged illegal possession of the sword by Socht. When Socht realises that he will lose his case, he tells the story of his grand-father's death. What the proper legal procedure would have been at this juncture is unclear from the extant legal and historical material, but it makes for a good plot twist, and heightens the tension at the crucial moment when Socht faces the loss of his father's sword.³⁸ For Socht to change his case in this manner would normally have incurred a fine of one cow,³⁹ a very small fine compared with the value of the sword. Cormac then passes a judgement of seven *cumals* for the death of Socht's grand-father and restoration of the sword to Socht; however, Cormac can also play this game, and uses the same tactic to obtain the sword for himself.

The author shows hints of knowledge of early Irish law within the broad outline of his plot, but he subordinated minute details of procedure to the overall narrative structure. In essence, while early Irish law informs the reader's expectations of the story, the author does not allow legal niceties to become an obstacle to his overall intention of placing the sword of Cú Chulainn into Cormac's hands. In the case of fines, the author's familiarity with early Irish law was either superficial or deliberately impressionistic, to judge by the amount of the fines. In each case, seven *cumals* is levied, when in the case of the theft the correct amount is seven *cumals* to Cormac and ten *séts* to Fíthal. Seven *cumals* is used even in the case of Socht's grand-father, whose honour-price, assuming that he was a judge himself, would have been fifteen *séts*. The use of seven *cumals* is suggestive because it was a special number in early Irish law.⁴⁰ Its significance, given the context, would not be lost on the audience. Socht's legal disability is one of the driving forces of the plot, but this does not argue a deep legal knowledge, since a son's dependence on his father was a normal feature of early Irish society and would not have needed glossing or clarification.

3.2 Extract from the Book of Fermoy

Fíthal's most 'active' appearance in a prose text occurs in an untitled section of the Book of Fermoy, which begins on page 72 of the manuscript with the death and burial of Conn Cétchathach.⁴¹ The extract goes on to narrate the important events of Cormac mac Airt's life and reign until he is blinded and deposed as High King of Ireland. Cormac retires to Ráth Aichle

³⁸Neil McLeod, 'The Two *Fer Midboth* and Their Evidence in Court', *Ériu* 33 (1982).

³⁹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 191–192.

⁴⁰Neil McLeod, 'Irish Law: Significant Numbers and the Law of Status', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 9 (1995), pp. 155–166.

⁴¹Máighréd Ní C. Dobs, 'From the Book of Fermoy', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 20 (1936).

where he writes *Tecosca Cormaic* for his son, Cairbre, who is now the High King of Ireland. During this time, Cormac sends Fíthal around Ireland to Cormac's allies to induce them to avenge his loss of the High Kingship. After Fíthal describes all of the noble qualities of Cormac to them, they refuse to attend to Cormac or to attack his enemies. Their argument is that, now that Cormac is blemished, he cannot be High King of Ireland, but they will give him the pension that he deserves for his retirement. This matter is still unresolved as the action moves to a great assembly at which Cormac appears to discuss the situation with the men of Ireland.

3.2.1 Previous Scholarship

The text was printed in a diplomatic edition by Máighréad Ní C. Dobs in *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 20 in 1936. Cormac's loss of the High Kingship of Ireland for a second time due to the loss of his eye is also noted by Tomás Ó Cathasaigh.⁴² Ó Cathasaigh places this episode within the context of the International Heroic Biography and describes the circumstances of his final demise, including his blinding.⁴³ However, the story is not referred to often in the scholarly literature on the subject.

3.2.2 The Text

Dobs' diplomatic edition of the extract covers Book of Fermoy pages 72–80; the section which most concerns Fíthal occurs on page 76–78.⁴⁴ The manuscript itself is in very poor condition. The outside edges are frayed and stained, which frustrates attempts to determine the words on the right-hand margins of right-hand columns of recto pages and the left-hand margins of left-hand columns of verso pages. The condition of the manuscript creates burdensome conditions for a complete transcription and continuous translation of the text.

The linguistic dating of this text is not easy. There are some infixed pronouns, and preverbal *ro-* is used. However, there are many Early Modern forms and spellings as well. The evidence suggests a late Middle Irish date (circa eleventh or twelfth century) and a subsequent history of scribal modernisation.

3.2.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

The text shows Fíthal in his most active role of any of the tales presented. The story intimately involves Fíthal in the continuing political crisis after Cormac's dethronement. In this turmoil his role is as Cormac's envoy to his allies, whom Fíthal attempts to galvanise into violent action against those who attacked Cormac. Although the allies refuse to acquiesce to his request, the

⁴²Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), pp. 87–92.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 69–72.

⁴⁴Máighréad Ní C. Dobs, 'From the Book of Fermoy', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 20 (1936), pp. 174–177.

fact that it is Fíthal who delivers the message on behalf of his king places Fíthal a most important mission on Cormac's behalf, and shows how intimate the author believed the two characters to be.

Fíthal travels around Ireland to persuade its kings to help Cormac, but the text presents only two of the responses which Fíthal received on his travels. The first of these captures the essence of the arguments against action by Cormac's allies:

'Cidh dúit a Fhithil' ar Brec mac Airt Cuirb, 'nach íat ar soghmara 7 ar sir-lenmhain ar Chormac 7 ar n-echta catha airmhe dúinn. Da madh [] ain leis ní raibhe socraide ag índarba [Mic Con]aigi *acht* da nonbar comhaltadh .i. naoi meic Lughna 7 a naí coín ríabcha do chuaíne ca[ela]mlach. Ro mharbhsamar Eocha Gundat ac [ath] Teamhrach. Lughaid m. Lughna ro dus dícend. Da mbraithmís Cond do dighlamar fein ar Ulltaibh. Da madh fuille a n-echt fíiní na dhírgalaibh bidhbhadh do *bermais* fein ní eturra.'⁴⁵

'What do you mean, Fíthal', said Brec son of Art Corb. 'Are these not our delectations and our persecution of Cormac and our deeds of battle that you enumerate to us? If he were [], he did not have a host driving out Mac Con, but two nines of fosterlings, i. e. the nine sons of Lughna and their nine brindled hounds from the litter of []. We killed Eocha Gundat at [] of Tara. Lugaíd mac Lugna beheaded him. If we were betraying Conn, we avenged ourselves on the Ulstermen. If it were an extension of (?) their [] depredations of attacks of enemies, we ourselves would come away with something (?) between them.'

Eventually the allies decided that they would pay for Cormac's retirement, but they would not help him regain the High Kingship. After Fíthal returns to Cormac, Cormac addresses the assembled kings of Ireland at the assembly to which we have already alluded.

3.2.4 Discussion

That a king should be without blemish is fundamental to the concept of kingship in early Ireland. The principle applies to Cormac who, as a consequence of losing his sight, is blemished and retires.⁴⁶ He sends Fíthal out, not to restore him to his kingship, but to exact revenge on those who took his eye. What is interesting here is the way the author makes Cormac appeal to his allies, the same ones who helped him back into power on previous occasions of exile, to exact revenge. As Ó Cathasaigh notes, Cormac is not a fighter but the ideal wise king.⁴⁷ Reaching out to his allies would be a natural reaction for his character.

⁴⁵Máighr  ad N   C. Dobs, 'From the Book of Fermoy', *Zeitschrift f  r celtische Philologie* 20 (1936), p. 176.

⁴⁶Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 19.

⁴⁷Tom  s    Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), p. 92.

The use of Fíthal as messenger is interesting. Normally, in early Irish literature messengers are sent without mention of who they were. Using Fíthal as the messenger to Cormac's allies, the author is indicating the closeness of the two characters and the importance of the message which Fíthal conveyed. That Fíthal represented a certain kind of tradition, legal- and wisdom-based, would not be lost upon the audience, and may have been a factor in the selection of Fíthal for this particular task. In a way, the author is demonstrating Cormac's personal involvement in the plea and its importance to Cormac and to the plot of the story. For instance, in response to Brec son of Art Corb, Fíthal says:

‘Ní geibh Cormac,’ ar Fithal, ‘acht fír-ndligh^{the} uair []te nach bia fulang d’índmhasaibh co n-[]a fhorba *ín* taethsat crich Breagh cona saer-chelibh. . .’⁴⁸

‘Cormac only recites (?) true laws since [] that there will not be toleration of accumulation of wealth with [] of (?) inheritance in which (?) they will fall the territory of Bregia with its freeborn vassals. . .’

While Colin Ireland describes the character of Fíthal as always being passive, this particular story shows Fíthal in a more active light than may be readily apparent. Fíthal is given a task which Cormac could not undertake himself and which is of the highest importance to the characters involved in the story. While Fíthal himself is not at the centre of the action, he plays a pivotal role in the story. Unfortunately, the manuscript is corrupt, which makes the translation frustrating and possibly loses important details. Another aspect of the story to be borne in mind is the fact that the piece is a summary, which does not contain enough detail to let us ascertain more closely the function of Fíthal within the story. It is enough to say here that Fíthal was a well-known and highly regarded wisdom figure who was deployed by our author in a role calling for high-level diplomacy all over Ireland.⁴⁹

This story shows that Fíthal was more than merely a judge in the employ of Cormac mac Airt. That Fíthal continued to serve him after Cormac was justifiably removed from the High Kingship of Ireland demonstrates Fíthal's intimacy with Cormac in the mind of the author. As is shown later, in the sections that discuss Fíthal's connection to Finn, attempts to sever Fíthal from Cormac or augment his relationship with Cormac were intentionally made and ultimately rejected, which may show the same underlying sense of the closeness of the king-sage and the judge-sage. In the same way, the dialogue between Fíthal and Cormac (see below, Chapter 5) presupposes a degree of intimacy which has been ruptured by Cormac's slighting of Fíthal.

If the suggestion is accepted that the text as we have it is an abridgement of an earlier and fuller story, there are essentially two authors. The dialogue in the story may provide evidence

⁴⁸Máighréad Ní C. Dobs, ‘From the Book of Fermoy’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 20 (1936), p. 176.

⁴⁹One may also wonder if the author was presenting Fíthal in this way because the character would be presumed to have superior powers of persuasion from his experience of this in a hypothetical court room?

for the earlier versions, if it was pressed into service in this shortened version. That this source might have been an oral story is not supported by evidence currently available and it is thus more reasonable to see the original as a written source rather than an oral one. The author of the epitome (if we may term it thus) makes his mark on the story in the way in which he chooses to abridge it. As the current emphasis of the story is on names and places, the author of the epitome has naturally made the dialogue as brief as possible, and spends more time informing the reader about the allies of Cormac that Fíthal visited. The dialogue may be a prompt for the reader to remember the story in its unabridged form.

The loss of Cormac's eye does not go without retribution. Since his allies refused to assist physically, even after Fíthal's pleas, the only traditional way of righting the wrong was by compensation: Fíthal judges all of the Bregian plain to Cormac (see Section 4.1.1).⁵⁰ This episode also survives as a judgement in *roscad* form and is one of the mythical 'leading cases' in the early Irish law tracts, which are presented in the following chapter. The existence of this *roscad* judgement provides additional reason to believe that there was previously a fuller version of our text. The political implications for the Uí Néill of Cormac's claim to *Mag mBreg* were important because the existence of a written account could be used for authentication of claims on land.⁵¹ It is reasonable to assume that this text was created to bolster Uí Néill claims to the middle part of Ireland.

Fíthal's appearance here tends to support the supposition that the texts which are now extant are only a small fraction of a richer body of lore and written material which authors could draw on to enrich their narratives. Fíthal surfaces from time to time in these written texts, frequently enough to let us form a coherent view of his character, however dimmed that view may be from the passage of time and loss of texts.

3.3 *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*

The *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*⁵² is a large and sprawling work concerned, primarily, with a story about Cormac mac Airt and his attempt to force the province of Munster to pay tribute to him. The action reaches its climax in a siege of the King of Munster by Cormac's army. Here, he employs his druids (in feather head-dresses, no less) to break the siege in his favour. He is unsuccessful in this and is defeated by Fíachu Mullethan.⁵³ Fíthal appears briefly, at the beginning of the tale, with Cormac's son Cairbre Lifechair to set down the laws, genealogies, and history of Ireland.

⁵⁰Máighréd Ní C. Dobs, 'From the Book of Fermoy', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 20 (1936), pp. 175–177.

⁵¹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 204.

⁵²For a discussion of the title, see Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980), p. 94.

⁵³Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), p. 88.

3.3.1 Previous Scholarship

There are three editions of this text. The first appeared in *Revue Celtique* volumes 43 and 44 edited and translated into French by M.-L. Sjoestedt; the second was a book production of the two articles from *Revue Celtique*; the third was a book produced by Seán Ó Duinn in 1992.⁵⁴ Sjoestedt's edition proposes a twelfth-century date for the text, while acknowledging that the earliest appearance of the story was in the fifteenth century. She states that it is impossible to reach a final decision on the date of the tale, and suggests that it should be analysed in conjunction with other Irish tales, and measured against them, to provide a more robust dating. With modern advances in historical linguistics, a new edition should be able to date the text relatively and perhaps absolutely. Investigation of this historical text might likewise prove fruitful; for our present purposes M.-L. Sjoestedt's edition provides a good basis for the work undertaken here.

Seán Ó Duinn's edition is a dual-language, Modern Irish/English, book targeted specifically at a non-specialist audience. In his edition, Ó Duinn glosses over problematic parts of the text, and his summary translation gives only the major points of the text. While this edition fits its target audience well, it is not useful for the specialist. As Ó Duinn notes in his introduction, this text has received very little scholarly attention. This is surprising, as it forms one of the major texts in the life of Cormac Mac Airt. We have only come across two references to it in the secondary literature. One of these is made by Tomás Ó Cathasaigh in relation to the heroic biography of Cormac,⁵⁵ the other is by Proinsias Mac Cana, who discusses the text in the context of the medieval tale lists.⁵⁶

3.3.2 The Text

The manuscript history of the Book of Lismore is extremely complicated. The book was written in Co. Cork in the late fifteenth century, and scholarly consensus suggests that the book was commissioned by Finghin Mac Carthaigh Riabhach and his wife, Caitilín, though this supposition is based upon a vague scribal note, and it is perhaps as likely that the true recipients of the book were Finghin's parents. Whoever commissioned the book, it contains the only surviving original copy of the text under discussion here.⁵⁷

The manuscript has three principal scribes: Scribe A, who is currently unidentified; Scribe B, Aonghas Ó Callanáin; and Scribe C, who also remains unidentified. After its production,

⁵⁴Seán Ó Duinn, *Forbhais Drom Dámhghaire* (Cork: Cork Mercier Press, 1992).

⁵⁵Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), p. 88.

⁵⁶Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980), p. 94.

⁵⁷Brian Ó Cuív, 'Observations on the Book of Lismore', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Series C* 83 (1983).

the manuscript is known to have been moved to the friary of Timoleague, where Míchéal Ó Cléirigh made a transcription in 1629. The next likely mention of the book is in a letter to the Earl of Cork after the capture of Mac Carthaigh Riabhach's Castle in 1642. It is possible that it was then walled up in Lismore during Lord Muskerry's attack of the same year. However, there is a note in the manuscript which indicates that someone had access to it in 1745. The book was re-discovered by workmen during structural changes in 1814, when it passed into the possession of local Cork scholars, who then dismantled it. The manuscript, as it appears today, was returned circa 1816 and 1820 and was reconstructed in 1856 with sixty-six folios missing. In 1930, the manuscript was transferred to Chatsworth, Derbyshire, the seat of the Duke of Devonshire and owner of Lismore Castle, where it remains to this day.⁵⁸ In addition to the manuscript itself, there are six copies⁵⁹ in Irish, four in English,⁶⁰ and one piece of criticism⁶¹ in English made for, and held by, the Royal Irish Academy.

The content of the manuscript is very similar to that of the Book of Fermoy, which was commissioned about the same time as the Book of Lismore.⁶² Both books are compilations of texts brought together for the enjoyment of the patrons of the scribes. As for the passage currently under discussion, the action in the text is located in Munster, the manuscript was created in Cork, and it is reasonable to presume a southern bias to the texts in the Book of Lismore. This could explain why Cormac fails in his attempt to exact tribute from Munster.

A full linguistic survey of this tale must await a new edition, and is outside the scope of this chapter. Sjoestedt's edition, while old, is more than adequate for the uses to which it is put here. The section in the tale within which Fíthal appears is a small one and the transcription or translation appear to be non-problematic. As a consequence, Sjoestedt's edition forms the basis for the ensuing analysis.

3.3.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

The idea that Fintan, Fíthal, Cormac mac Airt and Cairbre Lifechair wrote down the laws of Ireland is also reflected in *The Irish Ordeals*, *Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise*, and *the Decision as to Cormac's Sword*⁶³ (see Section 3.1.4) and *Bruiden na hAlmaine* (see Section 3.4).⁶⁴ The legal poem *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* names Fíthal as one of the authors

⁵⁸Brian Ó Cuív, 'Observations on the Book of Lismore', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Series C* 83 (1983), pp. 270–272.

⁵⁹RIA MSS 24 C 6 (123–153), 24 C 9 (1–86), 23 H 5 (91–99), 23 H 6 (176–182), and 23 C 6 (66–118).

⁶⁰RIA MSS 24 M 16, 12 F 31 (115–133), 12 M 13 (215–296), and 12 M 14 (1–90).

⁶¹RIA MS 12 M 11

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 283–284.

⁶³Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', in *Irish Texts*, 199–202, 217–221.

⁶⁴Standish Hayes O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica: a collection of tales in Irish with extracts illustrating persons and places*, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1892).

of the law but this reference occurs in a list of other texts and possibly refers to his authorship of two legal texts: *Finn'sruth Fíthail* and *Aí Emnach*. As the legal corpus does not appear to mention Fíthal's role, with Cormac mac Airt, as the author of the laws this seems to be an addition made by an unknown author, possibly the author of *The Irish Ordeals*, *Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise*, and *the Decision as to Cormac's Sword*, the oldest text within which this tradition appears. As will be argued in a later chapter, it is unlikely that this information was in circulation in oral transmission before its appearance in *The Irish Ordeals*, *Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise*, and *the Decision as to Cormac's Sword*.

In this text Fíthal makes just a short appearance in a story which only tangentially involves the law. The purpose of the episode involving Fíthal is to magnify Cormac's wisdom connections rather than to say anything substantial about Fíthal. The reason for Fíthal's appearance here could be that the author wanted to emphasise Cormac's association with wisdom through Fíthal, and the act of writing down the laws is an ancient form of identifying a person as wise. After transmitting the tradition of Fíthal and Cormac writing down early Irish law, the author then moves forward quickly to the more interesting and exciting topics of battles, druidic magic, sieges, and feats of heroism.

One interesting addition to the list of tradition topics written down by Fíthal is a treatise on the procedural basis of the laws. Our author refers distinctly to the creation of the forms of legal procedure when referring to Fíthal. Unfortunately, the law text concerned, *Aí Emnach*, is no longer extant.⁶⁵ This seems to indicate that the author had knowledge of legal texts attributed to Fíthal by legal sources, though this did not deter him from attributing many other kinds of traditional knowledge to Fíthal. As argued elsewhere, this is a symptom of the expanding image of Fíthal in the literature, from being seen simply as a judge to exercising a wider role as a generic wisdom figure.

3.3.4 Discussion

It would seem that the author of this piece knew something of the lore concerning Cormac, Fíthal, and Cairbre. This inference is based on their close association in *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*, the near-identical relationship that we find in *The Irish Ordeals*, *Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise*, and *the Decision as to Cormac's Sword*, which is earlier than *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*. Given that the text of *Cormac's Adventure* is found mainly in manuscripts of Northern provenance and that *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire* is found in a manuscript of Southern provenance, these coincidences argue for a wide distribution of texts concerning Cormac and his associates.

As is evident from the foregoing, the law as such was not the main focus of this text.

⁶⁵Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 163–164.

However, the author demonstrates his awareness of the law by singling out the procedural aspects of the law in reference to Fíthal. This also serves to indicate to the reader that he knows the legends and lore concerning Cormac and his connection to the law. This in its turn serves to establish the author's authority in regard to his story as a whole. Mentioning Fíthal emphasises the author's learned connections and helps to authenticate the story in the mind of the reader.

3.4 Bruiden na hAlmaine

This tale details a riot at a feast attended by Finn mac Cumail with the Fianna and Goll mac Morna with his warriors.⁶⁶ O'Grady's edition supplies an English translation and an introduction which, in this case, is short and uninformative. However, since this is the only printed and generally accepted version of the text published to date, it will be used as the basis for the following discussion.

The plot of the story hinges on a riot precipitated by Goll showing the tribute that he had collected from the Lochlainnaigh. Finn asks how long Goll has done this, as Finn himself also claims tribute from them. Goll relates how he was chased from country to country by Finn's father before finally turning and killing him. This enrages Finn and the contention escalates into a full-scale riot. Only Fergus Finnbheóil and his band of poets stop the slaughter through poetry and song.

The two sides agreed to submit their contention to the judgement of Cormac mac Airt, the King of Ireland, in two weeks' time. Once they had gathered at Tara at the appointed time Cormac, along with Cairbre Lifechair, Ailbe, Fíthal, Flaithrí, and Fintan mac Bóchna sat in judgement on the riot. Finn begins to relate what happened but is interrupted by Goll who objects to Finn's biased account. Goll suggests that Fergus Finnbheóil give the account to the court. Finn agrees to this and Fergus relates his account of what happened at the riot. Once Fergus has finished, the court retires to deliberate. During these deliberations, Flaithrí gave a judgement which Cormac rejected; then Fíthal gave a judgement, which Cormac and Fintan accepted as correct: that both parties should be exempted from payment of damages. Both sides accepted the judgement and peace was restored between them.

3.4.1 Previous Scholarship

Alan Bruford mentions this story several times in his *Gaelic Folktales and Medieval Romances*.⁶⁷ Bruford supplies small pieces of information about the tale. His main point is to remark on

⁶⁶Standish Hayes O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1892), vol. 1 336–342, vol. 2 378–385.

⁶⁷Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Medieval Romances: A Study of the Early Modern Irish 'Romantic Tales' and Their Oral Derivatives* (Dublin: The Folklore of Ireland Society, 1969).

the relative uniqueness of the story in comparison with other *bruiden* stories that involve Finn, which usually revolve around tempting Finn into a *síd* mound.⁶⁸ Gerard Murphy also mentions this tale in passing in his *Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* and makes the same general comments about the uniqueness of this tale among the *bruiden* type of Fenian tale.⁶⁹

3.4.2 The Text

The printed edition used here is based on British Museum Additional MS 18,747. However, there are seventeen MS copies of this text in RIA MSS⁷⁰ and three British Library MSS.⁷¹ The oldest is a seventeenth century copy in the RIA collection, made by the scribe Dáiví Ó Duibhgeanainn in Co. Sligo. The other manuscripts were written at locations scattered around Ireland from Co. Sligo in the north-west to Cos. Cork and Clare in the south and south-west.

The language of the text used as the basis for this section is Early Modern Irish. The scribe has sprinkled the text with earlier spellings and occasionally uses the preverbal particle *ro*. His archaistic tendency is more persistent in the case of *ocus* for *agus*, and there appear to be a few omitted marks of lenition. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this text is older than the Early Modern period.

One curious feature of the text that warrants mention is the consistent use of the phrase *is ann sin* to begin paragraphs. Fifteen out of the twenty-five paragraphs identified by the editor use this phrase. This seems to be akin to the English use of ‘and then... and then...’ and helps to mark changes of focus in the narration of the story. Typically, it switches the spotlight from Goll to Finn and back again. Similar stylistic devices are found elsewhere, e. g. in later medieval annals. This could be an example of that sort of practice, rather than evidence for anything more substantial.

3.4.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

Fíthal, in the presence of a set of characters similar to those who appear in *Decision as to Cormac’s Sword* and *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*, gives the correct judgement in the case of the riot. In this tale, his status as a generic wisdom figure is not made explicit, but his legal acumen and his knowledge of the way to achieve peace through legal proceedings is on display.

⁶⁸ Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Medieval Romances: A Study of the Early Modern Irish ‘Romantic Tales’ and Their Oral Derivatives* (Dublin: The Folklore of Ireland Society, 1969), p. 9.

⁶⁹ Gerard Murphy, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: The Cultural Relations Committee, 1955), p. 53.

⁷⁰ 23 O 1 (83–95), 24 P 6 (201–208i), 3 B 13 (56–80), 24 B 35 (51–68), 12 F 7 (322m–326), B iv 1 (248a,m–252a,i), 24 M 25 (51r°), 24 C 8 (6–17), 24 C 25 (53–86), 23 N 25 (33–53), E vi 1 (364–387), 3 B 3 (147m–159), 24 L 31 (75–84), 24 I 9 (104m–124), 24 I 23 (169v°), 23 E 15 (161–169), and 24 P 29 (97–115).

⁷¹ BM Egerton 131 (9), BM Additional 18,747, and BM Additional 18,946 (f. 70).

He also provides a correction to his son when Flaithrí gives a judgement that could lead to more rioting. His literary role, as in other tales concerning Finn and Fíthal (see below), is to find a way to free Finn from legal liability without overburdening the plot.

3.4.4 Discussion

Given that this is most probably a late tale, it nevertheless has embedded within it some interesting and obscure features of early Irish law. The fight itself is of no consequence and is a common feature of the Fenian tales. When the arguments begin before the court, Finn's account is interrupted by Goll's objection that his account is biased. Unbiased witnesses are therefore needed, and Fergus Finnbheóil is called upon to give testimony. The law of witnesses states that the testimony of one person is not enough, but if the person does not stand to gain from the case, his testimony is acceptable.⁷² Here, of course, it could be argued that Fergus does stand to gain because he was paid by Goll for his services. However, under the law of poets, payments to them are beyond liability. Thus Fergus could give evidence in court as to what he saw without the support of his band of poets and musicians.⁷³ By giving Fergus the surname 'Truelips', the author also makes it clear to us in advance that he will be the one called upon to give testimony in the forensic section of the tale.

Once Fergus has given his testimony, the debate among the members of the tribunal begins. Eventually, Flaithrí proposes that damages be awarded to Clann Morna, but Cormac ridicules him. Flaithrí, however, cites the provision that assault that left no mark ('white-striking') is very different from those that draw blood (two *séts* of *éric* and 1/21 of the person's honour-price versus four *séts éric* and 1/7 of the person's honour-price).⁷⁴ Fíthal proposes at this point that neither party should pay fines. Cormac and Fintan accept this as the correct judgement, which concludes the case in a neat and self-contained way – as our author doubtless intended.

In this story, a point stressed by Robin Stacey comes to the fore: the socially cohesive nature of aspects of early Irish law.⁷⁵ True to this principle, our author has Fíthal find a way to placate both sides with a judgement that does not penalise either of them. Stacey stresses that early Irish law is focused on maintaining peaceful social relationships, rather than on the modern, more abstract notion of justice. This approach reflected the close-knit, rural nature of early Irish

⁷²Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 203.

⁷³T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen and D. B. Walters, eds., *Lawyers and Laymen: Studies in the History of Law Presented to Professor Dafydd Jenkins on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986), pp. 210–211, §1 and §7. See also Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Ties That Bind: Immunities in Irish and Welsh Law', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 20 (1990).

⁷⁴Neil McLeod, 'Assault and Attempted Murder in Brehon Law', *Irish Jurist* 33 (1998), p. 352.

⁷⁵Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: From Court to Custom in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 55–81. See also, Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Law and Order in the Very Old West: England and Ireland in the Early Middle Ages', in Benjamin T. Hudson and Vickie Ziegler, eds., *Crossed Paths: Methodological Approaches to the Celtic Aspect of the European Middle Ages* (London: University Press of America, 1991).

society. Balancing the delicate social web of obligations and the needs of justice promoted a jurisprudence that exploited those same social relationships to maintain peace and order.

Our author displays his legal acumen in this story by showing the audience that he knows his way around some dry distinctions in early Irish law. He must do this in such a way that the reader appreciates the level of erudition attained by his characters, and he achieves this by using Flaithrí as his mouth-piece. However, he must also contrive to find a way of preserving the legal rectitude of his characters, while at the same time engineering a satisfactory *dénouement*. He does this by allowing a realistic discussion of fines, but then lets Fíthal resolve the dilemma in a way that permits all parties to come away without acrimony and also allows the tale to be concluded neatly.

3.5 Advice for Finding a Good Wife

A wisdom figure offering advice to a spiritual ‘son’ about whom to marry is a classic motif, which was discussed in Chapter 2. This text is connected to the Wisdom of Aldfrith of Northumbria because it follows an excerpt from it, which is identified by Colin Ireland as N₃ (RIA 966 (23 N 27)). This advice is not included by Ireland in his edition of the Wisdom of Aldfrith of Northumbria, since it is clearly meant to be spoken by Fíthal, and it does not seem to chime thematically with the other parts of the Wisdom of Aldfrith. In this short text, Fíthal advises his son about the qualities and physical characteristics of the best and worst women. Also included in this section is a short compilation text containing similar material from other sources.

3.5.1 Previous Scholarship

The volume of scholarship on this text is quite extensive. It was included in the edition of *Senbríathra Fíthail*, which was first printed without translation, by Rudolf Thurneysen in 1912.⁷⁶ Roland Smith produced an edition and translation of the text with cross-references and notes on similarities to other Irish wisdom texts.⁷⁷ E. J. Gwynn corrected perceived mistakes in Smith’s edition.⁷⁸ Roland Smith then published an eighteenth-century condensed copy of the advice incorporating the listing of wifely virtues and vices.⁷⁹ Fergus Kelly alludes to *Senbríathra Fíthail* and gives a short summary of the text, writing in advance of the impending edition by

⁷⁶Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Zu irischen Handschriften und Literaturdenkmälern’ in *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philologisch-Historische Klasse n.F, vol. 14, no. 3 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1912–13), pp. 11–22.

⁷⁷Roland M. Smith, ‘The *Senbríathra Fíthail* and Related Texts’, *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928).

⁷⁸E. J. Gwynn, ‘*Senbríathra Fíthail*’, *Revue Celtique* 46 (1929), pp. 268–271.

⁷⁹Roland M. Smith, ‘Fíthal and Flann Fína’, *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930).

Colin Ireland.⁸⁰ The text had also been printed in a diplomatic edition by Kuno Meyer.⁸¹ On the critical side, Lisa Bitel also discusses this piece in her *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* in the course of her analysis of women in early Irish literature.⁸²

Colin Ireland's edition represented a considerable leap forward in the understanding of these texts.⁸³ He identified thirty-three manuscripts which contain at least a fragment of the present text.⁸⁴ In his discussion he made a strongly-argued case for believing that the wisdom text is that of Aldfrith of Northumbria,⁸⁵ and is not to be associated with Fíthal.⁸⁶ The confusion arose from what Ireland identified as the L Recension of texts, which attributes the wisdom text to Fíthal. He pointed out that even there the scribes are not unambiguous in their association of Fíthal with the text, but often attribute it to Cormac, and sometimes to Fíthal and Cormac both in the same text.⁸⁷

3.5.2 The Text

Since *Senbríathra Fíthail* as a whole has been re-identified by Colin Ireland as the wisdom of Aldfrith of Northumbria, only the section containing 'Advice for Finding a Good Wife' was extracted for analysis here. It was not included in Ireland's edition because of its thematic distinctions (see above). For this reason and because the text was at one time identified as the wisdom of Fíthal, it may count as evidence for a perception of Fíthal in the literary tradition. For instance, Keating's account of Fíthal giving his son advice about women in *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (see Section 3.12), is likely testimony to this aspect Fíthal of and enhanced his standing in early Irish literature.

The text of 'Advice for Finding a Good Wife', as may be seen from Smith's edition, is Old Irish. Correct use of the infixed pronoun and the future tense form of *do-beir* are encountered. The list of wifely virtues seems to be compatible with the same linguistic date, since the vocabulary and word-forms conform to Old Irish usage; but there is not enough linguistic material available in the text to make a definite ascription of date.⁸⁸

The text discussed here is based on Ireland's N-recension of texts as translated by Smith.

⁸⁰Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 285.

⁸¹Kuno Meyer, 'Mitteilungen aus Irischen Handschriften', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 8 (1912), pp. 112–113.

⁸²Lisa M. Bitel, *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 27–30.

⁸³Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 21.

⁸⁵For more information on Aldfrith, see Ibid., pp. 52–56 and Colin Ireland, 'Aldfrith of Northumbria and the Irish Genealogies', *Celtica* 22 (1991).

⁸⁶Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), p. 45.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 43–45.

⁸⁸There is a Modern Irish version of the text in the nineteenth century RIA MS G vi 1, p. 72.

While it is related to the oldest manuscript copy of the Wisdom of Aldfrith,⁸⁹ Ireland considered that this version may have connections to his Y-recension.⁹⁰ There is one other version of the wifely virtues and vices in Royal Irish Academy G VI I, p. 18 (33) i. This manuscript was written in the eighteenth century and is a copy of an Old Irish original in the N-recension as noted above. As this is a bare list, there is almost no grammatical information to help us determine a date for the text.

The question-and-answer format of the text is standard, almost mandatory for wisdom texts.⁹¹ Fíthal's son asks him about the qualities and types of women he should or should not marry. The advice Fíthal gives is a mix of physical characteristics, such as 'do not marry the slender short one with curling hair',⁹² and subjective psychological characteristics, including 'do not marry the slender prolific one who is lewd (and) jealous'.⁹³

3.5.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

In this text, in which Fíthal gives fatherly advice to his son about whom he should marry, legal considerations are very much in the background. The advice concentrates on the physical characteristics and psychological traits of the prospective wife. Here, Fíthal's role is to pass on socially valuable wisdom rather than legally correct precepts. The list of wifely virtues is one step further removed from the prose advice. Indeed, the involvement of Fíthal and his son is mentioned only at the beginning of the list. The context is reduced from that of a dramatic dialogue to more adjectival indications of the best and worst qualities of women.

3.5.4 Discussion

The advice offered in this text is in the form of a standard list which, as shown above, has reflexes in other parts of early Irish literature concerning women. Seen in this perspective, the advice 'do not marry the evil-counselling, evil-speaking one, whichever one you do marry' finds particularly clear parallels in *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó* and *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. In the case of *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó*, all of Mac Dathó's problems are seen to follow from taking his wife's advice.⁹⁴ In the case of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, Ailill dismisses Medb's advice about rivalry among

⁸⁹N₁ (MS RIA 967 (23 N 10)).

⁹⁰Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 22–23.

⁹¹Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 45–48. See also Carolyn Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 143–148.

⁹²Roland M. Smith, 'The *Senbriathra Fithail* and Related Texts', *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928), p. 53.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Erich Poppe, 'Scéla Muicce Meic Da Thó Revisited', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 9 (1997).

the tribes in their host as woman's counsel.⁹⁵

Even though Fíthal's advice does not touch on legal matters directly in this text, they frame the background for the advice. A woman, with strictly prescribed exceptions, is a legal incompetent in early Irish law.⁹⁶ She cannot act legally without the approval of her husband or a male relative, usually the head of her kin, with confined exceptions in certain types of marriage.⁹⁷ This creates a situation where there are not only political but also legal ramifications if a wife breaks the law while under her guardian's care. Thus, for a primary wife at least, not only were her physical qualities taken into consideration but her personality must be assessed so that any legal liability she may incur is minimised for her prospective husband. The text therefore relates to real issues which faced someone searching for a suitable wife in early Ireland.

The eighteenth-century list of wifely virtues and vices is essentially a condensed form of the Old Irish original. This epitome draws pretty directly upon the original for the adjectives describing a good wife and a bad wife, and a fair amount of the surrounding prose is also imported directly from the earlier text. Digests and epitomes were common in the manuscript tradition wherever space was limited, or where a scribe wished to copy only certain select pieces of information which suited his purpose. In this case, the scribe wished to copy only the essence of the work, rather than the supporting material and dramatic context. As in the case of later commentary on earlier Irish law, the scribe has brought bare facts to the reader, without making the context explicit.

While Fíthal's advice about women appears in the oldest manuscript recension of the *Wisdom of Aldfrith*, its appearance in a recension which does not explicitly give Fíthal as the source of the wisdom, notably in the L-recension, does need mention. It is unclear from its placement next to a piece identified as the *Wisdom of Aldfrith* whether this was meant to indicate that they were connected. Given this uncertainty, it may be suggested that they are not – and not least because the selection of *Wisdom of Aldfrith* is almost the same size as that attributed to Fíthal. It would seem rather that these were simply free-standing pieces of wisdom which were of interest either to the scribe (or to the person for whom the text was created). As discussed briefly above, wisdom figures giving their disciples or 'sons' advice about marriage were a common phenomenon in other societies. As this was such a widespread motif, it is not surprising that Fíthal would be given this didactic role as well as his legal duties. If that is a correct inference, the text demonstrates that Fíthal's literary sphere of activity was already expanding in the early period, before the composition of his dialogue with Cormac mac Airt.

⁹⁵Cecile O'Rahilly, ed., *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976 [reprint 2003]), pp. 5–6, lns. 135–165 and pp. 128–129.

⁹⁶Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 68–79.

⁹⁷Bart Jaski, 'Marriage Laws in Ireland and on the Continent in the Early Middle Ages', in Christine Meek and Katharine Simms, eds., *'The Fragility of Her Sex': Medieval Irishwomen in Their European Context* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp. 17–22.

3.6 Cormac's Glossary

Sanas Chormaic is a glossary of Old Irish terms compiled by Cormac Ua Cuileannáin, King-Bishop of Munster, in the tenth century. As the Irish language was already shifting toward Middle Irish, the glossary is an attempt to reclaim texts that were beginning to be misunderstood by their readers, and it contains examples of the pseudo-etymologies so common in the early Irish tradition while simultaneously offering interesting asides on major mythological and hagiographical characters. Under the latter heading, Fíthal is given one small but illustrative entry in the glossary. The entry for Fíthal is the 583rd in the Yellow Book of Lecan version of the glossary (see below). Fíthal is explained in Latin as *nomen iudicis* 'name of a judge' and, in Irish, as a *laogh bó*, 'suckling calf'.

3.6.1 Previous Scholarship

Sanas Chormaic has consistently attracted scholarly attention though it still lacks a full edition. This is because the glossary is one of the few places in early Irish literature where the application and intent of a piece of literature are clear and unambiguous. There are three partial editions of the text. The earliest was produced by John O'Donovan in the mid-nineteenth century with notes and an index subsequently added by Whitley Stokes⁹⁸ who also discussed the Bodleian fragments of the text.⁹⁹ Kuno Meyer also edited two versions of the text though he acknowledges that it is incomplete.¹⁰⁰ D. A. Binchy's *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* contains a version of the glossary in a diplomatic edition from TCD MS H.3.18 (= 1337) and from the Yellow Book of Lecan, TCD MS H.2.16 (= 1318) at CIH 622.13–627.35.¹⁰¹

As for secondary literature, the mythological entries have attracted considerable scholarly comment, especially those on *imbas forosnai* and St Brigit. In these two entries, Cormac Ua Cuileannáin explains how *imbas forosnai* was conjured up by those who wished to divine the future, and states that it was banned by St Patrick.¹⁰² In the St Brigit entry, he explains how the saint's character is based upon a pre-Christian Goddess and daughter of the Dagda.¹⁰³ A full listing of secondary literature on these subjects is neither practical or necessary.

⁹⁸Cormac Ua Cuileannáin, *Sanas Chormaic/Cormac's glossary*, ed. John O'Donovan (Calcutta: The Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1868).

⁹⁹Whitley Stokes, *On the Bodleian fragment of Cormac's Glossary* (London: Philological Society, 1894).

¹⁰⁰Cormac Ua Cuileannáin, *Sanas Chormaic: An Old-Irish Glossary*, vol. 4, ed. Kuno Meyer (Dublin [repr. Dyfed]: Hodges, Figgis, & Co. [repr. Llanerch Publishers], 1913 [repr. 1994]), pp. xvii–xix.

¹⁰¹D. A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, vol. 6 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), pp. 622.13–627.35.

¹⁰²Cormac Ua Cuileannáin, *Sanas Chormaic: An Old-Irish Glossary*, vol. 4, ed. Kuno Meyer (Dublin [repr. Dyfed]: Hodges, Figgis, & Co. [repr. Llanerch Publishers], 1913 [repr. 1994]), p. 64. See also Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 168–169.

¹⁰³Cormac Ua Cuileannáin, *Sanas Chormaic: An Old-Irish Glossary*, vol. 4, ed. Kuno Meyer (Dublin [repr. Dyfed]: Hodges, Figgis, & Co. [repr. Llanerch Publishers], 1913 [repr. 1994]), p. 15. See also Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 162–163.

3.6.2 The Text

Sanas Chormaic is contained in seven manuscripts of which only three contain complete copies of the text. These copies are contained in the *Leabhar Breac*,¹⁰⁴ the Yellow Book of Lecan,¹⁰⁵ and TCD MS H.2.15 (= 1317). Of these full versions, the *Leabhar Breac* and the Yellow Book of Lecan copies contain a long version while the TCD MS H.2.15 copy preserves a short version. The relationship between these and all the other versions of the text have been explored thoroughly by others,¹⁰⁶ however a full edition would assist in placing all the texts in their proper contexts.

3.6.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

The entry in the glossary concerning Fíthal is extremely terse, consisting of a mere seven words. This entry is so short that little can be said about its context. Nor do the flanking entries provide any information to enlighten us further. The form of the glossary where entries are grouped alphabetically does not leave any space for any kind of extended analysis based upon form alone. This combined with the terseness of the entry itself leaves no space for analysis.

3.6.4 Discussion

As the Irish language developed away from Old Irish, the older texts became increasingly opaque. A solution to this difficulty was to compile a list of the difficult words that a reader might encounter in Old Irish texts. The glossary also allowed its author to demonstrate his etymological technique and could be used by those reading it to learn the etymological style so esteemed by the early Irish scholars.

Paul Russell has proposed another reason for writing a glossary: that *sanas* in this context has the meaning 'that which is secret'. Russell cites Patrick Sims-Williams' application of this meaning to the Welsh word *hanes*, which has a similar origin and semantic range to the Irish word. This would refer, of course, to arcane or the secret nature of native learning.¹⁰⁷ On this interpretation, the compiler of a glossary was presumably providing a set of keys with which to access the secret or arcane knowledge contained in the old, difficult, revered texts.

It was as one of the traditional authors of Irish law, that Fíthal was included in the glossary. The brevity of the entry relating to him may indicate that information about Fíthal was current at the time of writing, with the result that a longer entry was not deemed necessary. In fact, if the ascription to Cormac Ua Cuileannáin is correct, the most important text which we have

¹⁰⁴RIA 23 P 16, pp. 1–44 and pp. 263–272.

¹⁰⁵TCD MS H.2.16, cols. 3–87. For textual history, see Section 3.1.2.

¹⁰⁶Paul Russell, 'The Sounds of a Silence: The Growth of Cormac's Glossary', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 15 (1988).

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 11–14.

concerning Fíthal was yet to be written. However as Fíthal was a relatively minor character in the surviving literature, it hence may not have seemed important to the author to include more information.

The last issue raised by the entry is the equation of Fíthal with a calf, *laogh bó*. At first sight, there does not seem to be any connection.¹⁰⁸ According to DIL, the meanings of *laogh* (a larger form of *lóeg*) centred on young animals, with topical use as a term of endearment.¹⁰⁹ However, Whitley Stokes, in his note to the entry suggested: 'Fithal "a calf" is perhaps borrowed from *vitulus*'.¹¹⁰ On this assumption, the connection is readily explained. In the learned tradition of the early Irish glossators, the name 'Fíthal' became associated with Latin *vitulus*, 'calf', because of its close resemblance to it. This may then count as an example of a type of etymological glossing that is very widespread in Irish sources, and goes back to Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*.¹¹¹

3.7 Cormac's Dream

The text entitled *Cormac's Dream* relates to a nightmare that Cormac mac Airt had, in which he dreamt of the destruction of his high kingship by the Connachtmen.¹¹² In it he first saw himself losing the 'captive pillar'; sees his wife sleeping with the King of Connacht; the King of Connacht cutting off Cormac's right hand; the Connachtmen replacing the 'captive pillar' in Tara with their own; the Connachtmen cutting off the heads of Ulsterwomen; and Lugaid mac Lugna decapitating the wife of the King of Connacht. After dreaming this, Cormac brings his druids and wise men to interpret the dream for him, among them Fíthal, who is described as Cormac's judge and poet. They interpret the dream as Cormac's exile from the high kingship, which then happens. Cormac's half-brother, Nia, is killed by Aed son of Eochu and Cormac's mother comes to Tara to lament him.

3.7.1 Previous Scholarship

The most significant scholarly reference to this text is in Ó Cathasaigh's *Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt*, where he identifies Cormac's wife as symbolising Cormac's sovereignty.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸John O'Donovan, *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616. Edited from MSS in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy and of Trinity College Dublin with a translation and copious notes*, vol. 7 (Dublin: Hodges & Smith, 1848-51), p. 71.

¹⁰⁹DIL L 181.68–182.28.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Fergus Kelly, Verbal Communication.

¹¹²James Carney, 'Nia Son of Lugna Fer Trí', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 2 (1940-1), p. 187-197.

¹¹³Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), p. 76.

The only other reference is Kim McCone where he interprets the text as a reflection of the Old Testament story of Joseph's interpretation of dreams.¹¹⁴

3.7.2 The Text

The longest and most complete version of this text is found in TCD MS H.2.7 and was edited by James Carney.¹¹⁵ The manuscript was compiled by Lúcas Ó Dalláin in the fourteenth century. It was once thought to have formed a part of the Book of Uí Maine, but this is no longer the case. The manuscript also contains a copy of the *Senchas fer n-Alban* which suggests a northern bias to the texts is involved and may explain the concentration of the action in the northern half of Ireland.

The text itself is interpolated into an account of the genealogy of the kings of Connacht. On the basis that Cormac's half-brother's death is related in the Great Book of Lecan in a genealogy of the kings of Connacht. Carney argues that the interpolator changed the basic parts of the text to fit the context of the genealogy which he was creating of the kings of Connacht.¹¹⁶

3.7.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

After waking from his nightmare, Cormac calls on his druids and wise men to interpret his dream. Although Carney's translation omits those in attendance upon Cormac, they are present in the Irish original, and Fíthal is present. He is described as 'poet and judge' of Cormac, but it is not explained why he would be needed for interpreting dreams. In essence, Fíthal is depicted as one amongst the wise friends of Cormac. His wisdom is not confined to judgements and legal interpretations. We have seen him already as a judge, poet, and historian. Here, in concert with druids, he is an interpreter of dreams. While the author marks Fíthal as a judge and poet, he transcends these departments of learning to become a complete wisdom figure versed in all branches of knowledge.

The explanation for Fíthal's appearance in this episode hinges on his identification as a poet. Poets were often ascribed supernatural powers, and poetry was often used as a vehicle for prophecy. Whether or not Fíthal was a poet in the literal sense, and the extant material suggests that he was not particularly known for this, the close association of poetry and knowledge in general, which is implicit in the term *filidecht*, make it unsurprising that he would appear in an episode where a poet's powers of supernatural insight would be needed.

¹¹⁴Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 135–136.

¹¹⁵James Carney, 'Nia Son of Lugna Fer Trí', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 2 (1940-1).

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 187–191.

3.7.4 Discussion

Carney does not explain why the text is inserted in a king list, but he argues that *Cormac's Dream* is, in fact, a conglomeration of elements from the story of Cormac's final exile and the story of Nia's death.¹¹⁷ Carney uses a similar argument to explain the structure of *Táin Bó Fraích* and the motifs in the *Vita Kentigerni*.¹¹⁸ But while the internal structure of *Cormac's Dream* is suggestive of haphazardly arranged motifs, a more detailed demonstration would be needed to make this argument convincing.

The story is inserted immediately after a brief sketch of the circumstances of Nia's death.¹¹⁹ It seems that the story is well placed to expand upon this material. As Nia was Cormac's viceroy in Connacht, and not king himself, which would have been unusual, the author may have taken the opportunity to explain a little more about the unusual status of Nia in the list. While the episode could be a literary composition, the insertion of the story could be a learned explanation of an unusual circumstance based on an existing tradition.

3.8 Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*

The *Senchas Már*, 'Great Tradition', is the largest single compilation of early Irish law to survive. While it does not include every extant law text, it is an extremely important source for early Irish law. The focus of this section is not the *Senchas Már* itself but an untitled prologue attached to it in the Old Irish period, which we shall follow D. A. Binchy in calling, 'Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*' (hereafter, PHP).

Early Irish narrative texts are often accompanied by a later prologue. Such prologues often explicate or add to tradition, and the *Senchas Már* is not unique in this regard.¹²⁰ The prologue is set immediately after St Patrick's victory over the druids. Lóegaire, the high king of Ireland, calls together the best men of Ireland to accommodate their laws to the new faith, and a message is sent to Patrick to attend. However, while waiting for Patrick, Lóegaire asked the men what troubled them most about the new faith. They replied that the Christian duty of forgiveness troubled them most. Lóegaire then devised a plan to test this commandment on Patrick himself by killing one of Patrick's followers in his presence. This was duly done, but Patrick caused an earthquake that threw the assembly to the ground. Patrick's forgiveness was sought, and he requested Dubthach maccu Lugair, the royal poet of Ireland, to judge the case. Dubthach

¹¹⁷James Carney, 'Nia Son of Lugna Fer Trí', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 2 (1940-1), pp. 189–190.

¹¹⁸James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955), pp. 1–65. See also Dewi Wyn Evans, 'The Learned Borrowings Claimed for *Táin Bó Fraích*', in Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

¹¹⁹James Carney, 'Nia Son of Lugna Fer Trí', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 2 (1940-1), p. 190.

¹²⁰Robin Flower, 'Quidam Scotigena .i. Discipulus Boëthii or Boëthius and the Four Conditions of a Tale', *Ériu* 8 (1916). Note that sometimes not all four conditions are met.

recited a poem which stated that the murderer should be executed in turn, but that his soul would be forgiven and sent to heaven. After this judgement was given and acted on, they formed a committee of nine to revise the laws to suit the new faith. Then, the prologue tells the story of the separation of the legal and the poetic functions. The last and most interesting section of the prologue gives a list of the titles of the judgements of Ireland.

Curiously, however, the text of PHP does not contain any reference to Fíthal. The list of the titles of judgements given at the end of the Prologue enumerates many famous figures from the prehistoric phase of early Irish law, but it omits Fíthal. This omission is corrected in a Middle Irish list of famous Irish jurists contained in the B version of the text,¹²¹ which lists Fíthal as a judge from pre-Christian Ireland who ruled under *recht aicnid*, i. e. 'Natural Law' in the sense described by St Paul.¹²² This discrepancy makes it important to discuss both the PHP and Fíthal's place within the commentary attached to it.

3.8.1 Previous Scholarship

PHP contains important insights into the *mentalité* and intellectual underpinning of early Irish law. One of the first modern examinations of PHP was that by D. A. Binchy.¹²³ Binchy identified the major recensions of the text, distinguishing two principal strata: first, the oldest core of the text (i. e. the poetical judgement of Dubthach maccu Lugair and the Patrick story), which he dated between circa 895 and 901; and second, the form of the text extant in the manuscripts which he dated circa 1100. Kim McCone subsequently argued that the poetic judgement of Dubthach maccu Lugair (which he dated to the eighth century) is intimately bound with the surrounding prose of PHP, on the basis that the poetic judgement forms part of a theological argument for capital punishment in the face of the Christian precept of forgiveness.¹²⁴ John Carey rejected McCone's interpretation, pointing out that an explanation based entirely on the Old Testament was not sufficient to vindicate the judgement. As a consequence, McCone's argument that Patrick was to Ireland as Christ was to the Jews could not be correct. Carey argued instead that the purpose of PHP was to harmonise pagan law with Christian law. If there was a parallel to be drawn between Biblical and Irish circumstances, he suggested that it was more likely to involve God's covenant with Noah than the Jews and Christ.¹²⁵ Amongst other modern

¹²¹CIH 1652.15–1652.27.

¹²²Kim McCone, 'Dubthach Maccu Lugair and a Matter of Life and Death in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986), pp. 10–12. For criticism see John Carey, 'The Two Laws in Dubthach's Judgment', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 19 (1990), pp. 8–18.

¹²³D. A. Binchy, 'The Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Studia Celtica* 10–11 (1975–76).

¹²⁴Kim McCone, 'Dubthach Maccu Lugair and a Matter of Life and Death in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986). He reiterates his argument in Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 96–102.

¹²⁵John Carey, 'The Two Laws in Dubthach's Judgment', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 19 (1990), p. 18.

writers on PHP, Nerys Patterson explores the sixteenth-century context within which the various versions of the PHP were copied. She argues that the late medieval lawyers had to contend with the introduction of English common law, and that the changes made to PHP in these late manuscript versions reflect these struggles.¹²⁶ In his earlier article, Carey had noted the lack of a proper edition on which to base a discussion of PHP. He remedies this lack himself,¹²⁷ but this edition does not extend to the commentary that accompanies each recension of PHP, which is informative for investigations like the present one.

3.8.2 The Text

PHP is found in four manuscripts. Binchy identified three of them as A (= TCD H.3.18 p. 358^{a-b}), B (= TCD H.3.17 cols. 1, 5–12), and C (= BM Harley 432 fol 1^{a-b}).¹²⁸ Carey's edition also included the autonomous tale *Comthóth Lóegairi co Cretim 7 a Aided*, 'Lóegaire's Conversion to the Faith and His Death', as text D (LU in hand H). The relationship of these texts to one another is difficult to discern as Carey states:

[The text of MS] A descends directly from this revision [a revision of the autonomous narrative of MS D]; B gives a more hybrid text, adding to the unrevised prefatory matter (a)–(c) a Middle Irish list of jurists (d), and a version of the narrative as found in A (e), which, however, omits most of the material which would be redundant because present already in B^c. Where B juxtaposes, C synthesizes, conflating the story as found in A and B^c; it is hard to tell whether it took a composite text like B's as the source for its materials or brought the two versions together independently.¹²⁹

All commentators on this text agree that it is of Old Irish date. The *terminus post quem* is between circa 721 and circa 742 by the allusion to the *Bretha Nemed* at the end. The editor believes that it was written in the eighth or ninth century and is inclined to place it in the latter half of that period.¹³⁰

3.8.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

Fíthal's occurrence in PHP is seemingly as an after-thought to other, presumably more important, characters and law texts. In any event, he appears only in one manuscript version. This contrasts with Morann, who is given a prominent position for his *audacht*, 'testament', though it is more

¹²⁶Nerys Patterson, 'Gaelic Law and the Tudor Conquest of Ireland: The Social Background of the Sixteenth-Century Recensions of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Irish Historical Studies* 27 (1991).

¹²⁷John Carey, 'An Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Ériu* 45 (1994).

¹²⁸D. A. Binchy, 'The Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Studia Celtica* 10-11 (1975–76), p. 17.

¹²⁹John Carey, 'An Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Ériu* 45 (1994), p. 8.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

of a *Speculum Principis* than a law text (for a more detailed account, see Section 2.3). Both Fíthal and Morann are portrayed in the legal literature as wisdom figures who give instruction to pupils. The texts associated with them are *Finnsruth Fíthail* and the last two-thirds of the *Bretha Nemed Toísech* respectively. However, only Morann appears in PHP's list of significant legal authorities. The inference to be drawn from this is explored below.

3.8.4 Discussion

The final paragraph of PHP concludes the story of how the poets lost their ability to judge until Patrick asked Dubthach to judge on his behalf. The paragraph includes a list of texts containing the judgements of the mythological judges of ancient Ireland. Of these, only four are known today: *Gúbretha Caratniad*, 'The False Judgements of Caratnia', *Bretha Morind* 'The Judgements of Morainn', which is most likely the *Audacht Morainn*, 'Testament of Morann',¹³¹ *Bretha Déin Chécht*, 'The Judgements of Dían Cécht', and the *Bretha Nemed*. The other characters to whom collections of judgements were attributed are known in early Irish literature, but they have not contributed any literature to the surviving record.

One of the curious features of the list of legal texts at the end of the PHP is that the texts listed are associated with mythological characters. The only text mentioned in the last paragraph which is not so associated is *Bretha Nemed*, and it is not technically a member of the list. Liam Breatnach identifies these texts as 'mythological leading cases' and based this conclusion on other references to these persons in the law texts, and on copies of the list in non-legal texts. While *Bretha Doet Nemthine* seems to be partially based upon the placename, Nemthenn, the other element in the name being unknown, *Bretha Déin Chécht* is indubitably a law text.¹³² The reference to *Bretha Morind* is opaque; it could refer either to the last two sections of *Bretha Nemed Toísech* or to *Audacht Morainn*.

This brings us to the legal authorities whose names were appended to the B version of PHP. All commentators see this as an addition dating from the Middle Irish period.¹³³ Fíthal is added, here, among others. The question is what motivated the commentator to add Fíthal to this list. The simplest explanation is that, as the original list was composed of mythological figures, the commentator added other mythological figures to expand the list. The question then arises, 'Was Fíthal known to the original author of the list?' Unfortunately, this question may not have an answer. The list contains only one verifiable law text; and while this does not preclude the possibility that the others contained leading cases that are now not extant, it does not bring us any closer to an answer to our question. It would seem that all we can say is that Fíthal was

¹³¹Fergus Kelly, *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976).

¹³²Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), p. 176.

¹³³D. A. Binchy, 'The Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Studia Celtica* 10-11 (1975-76), pp. 20-21.

added as a member of an established ‘pantheon’ of mythological judges and lawgivers or, more casually, as an after-thought.

There is an interesting connection between PHP and *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* (see Section 4.1.3), which demonstrably draws heavily on PHP.¹³⁴ There is one apparent innovation in this text in regard to *Bretha Fachtnai maic Šenchath*, inasmuch as it refers to Fachtna as the father of Fíthal. This may suggest that the author of *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* had direct or indirect access to the B version of PHP.¹³⁵

3.9 Finn̄sruth Fíthail

As this is the only law text which is attributed to Fíthal and substantially extant, it is an especially important text for our enquiry. It takes the form of a dialogue between Fíthal and Socht, elsewhere identified as his son, and uses the formula, i. e. *co ber breith*, ‘how shall/should I judge’, to elicit Fíthal’s answers on a wide variety of legal subjects. Unfortunately, it does not have a prologue or other material that would help us to clarify its circumstances and traditional background. This makes it more difficult to extract much information about Fíthal’s place in the legal tradition from it, though some inferences may be drawn

3.9.1 Previous Scholarship

Roland Smith was the first to study *Finn̄sruth Fíthail* (hereafter FF) in detail in two articles in *Revue Celtique*.¹³⁶ In the first article, he identified the manuscript versions and the structure, and translated extracts from the text.¹³⁷ In the second article, he collected further fragments from other law texts and attempted to present all legal dicta introduced by the formula *co ber breith* as parts of an original FF.¹³⁸ Fergus Kelly merely noted FF in his *Guide to Early Irish Law*.¹³⁹ Liam Breatnach’s discussion provides the most authoritative statement on the position of FF within the legal tradition as a whole, and includes reference to all fragments and citations of FF within CIH.¹⁴⁰ Particular fragments have been edited and translated in the context of other texts within which they appear. For instance, Neil McLeod edited and translated those sections which

¹³⁴Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), p. 175.

¹³⁵Peter Smith, ‘*Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*: A Middle-Irish Poem on the Authors and Laws of Ireland’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994), p. 136.

¹³⁶Roland M. Smith, ‘The *Senbriathra Fíthail* and Related Texts’, *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928); Roland M. Smith, ‘Further Light on the Finn̄sruth Fíthail’, *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931).

¹³⁷Roland M. Smith, ‘The *Senbriathra Fíthail* and Related Texts’, *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928).

¹³⁸Roland M. Smith, ‘Fíthal and Flann Fína’, *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930), pp. 33–38. See also, Roland M. Smith, ‘Further Light on the Finn̄sruth Fíthail’, *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931).

¹³⁹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 285.

¹⁴⁰Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 253–257.

discuss contracts,¹⁴¹ and Thurneysen translated two fragments contained within the *Gúbretha Caratniad*.¹⁴²

3.9.2 The Text

FF occurs in two MS versions, A and B. The A version is contained in TCD MS H.3.18, pp. 259^a–260^b, where it ends abruptly due to a chasm in the MS (CIH 786.25–789.17). The B version is in TCD MS H.5.15 (= 1387), pp. 1^a–7^a (CIH 2131.1–2143.40). MS H.3.18 is a composite of different MSS, and a date for its version of FF cannot be ascribed with certainty. As for TCD MS H.5.15, a single scribe, Seán mac Aedagáin, wrote the entire MS, which consists of sixteen folios. The greater part of the text is concerned with legal matters and could possibly have been a school exercise.¹⁴³

As explained by Liam Breatnach, versions A and B contain independent sets of extracts from the same original text. A has more extracts than B, but B has some extracts that A lacks.¹⁴⁴ The extracts in both versions include text and commentary, the former being marked by large capitals in version B. Version A also incorporates glosses on the text; these are not present in B. Some of the responses in Version B are severely abbreviated, as though they were already well-known to the teachers or pupils who were to use the text. Since the concluding part of Version A is missing, it is formally possible that extracts found in Version B but not in Version A were contained in the missing part of Version A. A fuller analysis than can be attempted here might enable one to estimate the likelihood of this possibility.

3.9.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

The only way one knows that this text is the *Finn̄sruth Fíthail* is by a gloss, identifying the speakers, in the Version A. There are no formal indications, such as a prologue or illuminated title, and the text begins abruptly with a single capital ‘A’ after a short break from the preceding text. The glossator merely names the two interlocutors as Fíthal and Socht; neither is mentioned by name thereafter. There is thus precious little in the way of context within which to place Fíthal, other than the confirmation that Fíthal and Socht were connected by the time of the gloss, if not of the original text.

The teacher/pupil or, to put it more abstractly, the knower/non-knower combination is a classical structure in wisdom literature which occurs continually in Irish wisdom literature and,

¹⁴¹Neil McLeod, *Early Irish Contract Law* (Sydney: Centre for Celtic Studies, 1992), pp. 178–179.

¹⁴²Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Aus dem irischen Recht III’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 15 (1925), pp. 315, 342; Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Aus dem irischen Recht IV’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 16 (1927), p. 216.

¹⁴³T. K. Abbott and E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1921), pp. 249–255.

¹⁴⁴Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 255–256.

indeed, in Irish legal literature. For example, the last two-thirds of *Bretha Nemed Toísech* are composed as a dialogue of this structure between Morann and his pupil Neire. The implications of the connection between wisdom literature and the law is fully explored in Chapter 6. For now, it suffices to note that Fíthal and Socht are here placed in a timeless pose of wisdom literature.

3.9.4 Discussion

Three factors define the nature and status of FF. The first is the legal character of the text. Fergus Kelly places the text within the wisdom text section in his list of law texts, which is logical but not completely adequate.¹⁴⁵ The content of FF is not like that of *Tecosca Cormaic* or *Audacht Morainn*, where the wise give generalised instructions to their disciples. Here, by contrast, the questions and their answers are precise, legal and practical. FF is a practitioners' and students' guide to questions that arise in law cases, and in this respect, it is like *Gúbretha Caratniad*, which Kelly lists under law-texts.¹⁴⁶ The second factor is the literary setting of the text: in this case, the teacher/disciple relationship. As indicated above, this setting is common to wisdom texts from all parts of the world, and a natural method of instruction. The third factor is the formal mode of instruction. The question and answer format that is used in FF was a universally powerful mode of instruction for didactic literature in general, and was also used in *Gúbretha Caratniad*, and in the teaching of Welsh law in the later Middle Ages.¹⁴⁷

There are significant parallels between FF, *Gúbretha Caratniad* and *Bretha Nemed Toísech*. Each includes a learned practitioner and a less knowledgeable questioner. Each concerns the elucidation of problems of law, though from different points of view. *Gúbretha Caratniad* presents the problems from the viewpoint of a judge and his king. Here, the professional gives his opinion, the less knowledgeable one rejects it as false, and the professional is forced to explain the circumstances in which his opinion can be correct. FF approaches the problem differently, in that the interlocutors are two professionals, although one is more knowledgeable than the other. *Bretha Nemed Toísech* is a different type of text. As Liam Breatnach explains, it is split into three parts: the first is expository and concerns the Church in Ireland, the second and third are in dialogue form, featuring Morann and Neire.¹⁴⁸ In the second part Neire is the main interlocutor, while in the third part Morann expounds to Neire. This creates a hybrid form of text, whose structure grafts the wisdom literature onto a traditional law text. In this fusion of genres it has definite affinities with FF.

¹⁴⁵Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 285.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 266.

¹⁴⁷Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Instructional Riddles in Welsh Law', in Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁸Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), p. 190.

The kinds of topics raised by Socht in his questioning indicate that FF was meant to advise practitioners or teach students of the law, rather than to demonstrate some antiquarian curiosity on the part of the author. The questions are intentionally open-ended, e. g. *co bér breith im tigrudus* ‘how shall I pass judgement about negligence?’, which gives a broad canvas for Fíthal’s answer. Six of the questions ask about domestic arrangements, which would have been keen points of concern in a rural community. Four of the questions are concerned with territories and inter-territorial strife which, while not of such immediate concern in daily life was of frequent occurrence and affected everybody. Three of the questions are about contracts and contract law, which was another aspect of community life that often gave rise to litigation and the need for arbitration. Another three deal with the status of persons; the relevance of this topic to the circumstances of every family in the *túath* would have been obvious.

The formula *co ber breith* was identified early on by Roland Smith as the main structural feature of FF. He subsequently attempted to argue that all passages in early Irish law which utilise this formula belonged to FF.¹⁴⁹ While not all of those passages are really part of FF, Smith was correct in asserting that the formula is an integral part of FF. The formula itself is short and distinctive enough to aid memorisation and, as in a catechism, to act as a prompt for the student. This style and construction made it possible for the author of version B of FF to cite only the questions and occasionally the first couple of words of the answer to prompt his reader’s memory of the entire question and answer. It is possible that the author felt he did not need to repeat the entire portion, because he could assume that his reader would have an unabbreviated copy of the text to consult while reading the commentary. But parallels elsewhere in the MS tradition (e. g. the abbreviation of nuns in literary tables) make it likelier that we are dealing here with a function of orality in the milieu of legal teaching and learning. This does not necessarily mean that FF began life as an oral composition. The original text may have been composed in written form with the express purpose of being memorised. Given that memorisation was practised in early Ireland for both secular and ecclesiastical material, it is safe to assume that the form of FF follows its function.¹⁵⁰

FF establishes Fíthal as a pre-eminent early jurist. FF and the lost *Aí Emnach* (see below), assured Fíthal a place in the legal literature. There is no earlier example of a character named Fíthal anywhere in the extant literature. We could have wished for more information about Fíthal, but the broad outlines of his character and the basic structural relationships to other characters in the literature are set out or implied in this text. FF lets us glimpse the core around which later writers, all the way down to Keating, would craft their stories about Fíthal.

Fíthal never completely shed his legal attachment, though he accumulated an expanding repertoire of other attributes, e. g. becoming a poet and historian as well as a judge. In this

¹⁴⁹Roland M. Smith, ‘Fíthal and Flann Fína’, *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930), p. 33-38.

¹⁵⁰Robin Chapman Stacey, ‘Law and Memory in Early Medieval Ireland’, *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004).

process, Fíthal is like Morann (though each had his own particularities) in that they both emerge from a legal context to enter the wider literature as leading early jurists and exponents of the law, both to those practising the law and to those outside the discipline for whom the legal dimension was as interesting in literature as it was important for life.

3.10 *Acallam na Senórach*

That Fíthal appears in *Acallam na Senórach* is no surprise. As Joseph Falaky Nagy has demonstrated, the re-authorisation of early Irish literature was necessary as a corollary to the conversion to Christianity.¹⁵¹ In *Acallam na Senórach*, St Patrick is given a tour of Ireland by Caoilte, who tells the saint all of the ancient lore of the island. As Caoilte is associated with Finn mac Cumail and his roving band of warriors known as the Fianna, Fenian material predominates in the text. St Patrick asks Caoilte questions about the lore of Ireland, and in this process re-authorises the lore by his position as the patron saint of Ireland.

3.10.1 Previous Scholarship

Acallam na Senórach is a work which has garnered a large share of scholarly attention, as it provides extensive source material for Finn and the Fianna as they were seen in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One of the most important discussions is that of Nagy in his *Conversing with Angels and Ancients*.¹⁵² His thesis is that the conversion caused a crisis in Irish literature in relation to the authoritative base for it. The solution that the Irish *literati* devised was to write the new authority into the stories, with the intention that they would become acceptable within the new faith, having been re-authorised by the heroes of the new regime. Nagy uses the examples of St Patrick and St Columba to expound his thesis. Kim McCone briefly discusses the work in his *Pagan Past and Christian Present*, where he focuses on the war-band aspect of the Fianna and defers mostly to the analysis of the early boyhood deeds of Finn in Nagy's *The Wisdom of the Outlaw*.¹⁵³

A new translation of the text has been provided by Anne Dooley and Harry Roe.¹⁵⁴ It is more acceptable to a modern audience than the nineteenth-century translation by Standish O'Grady. For the Irish text one can also refer to the diplomatic edition of the text by Whitley Stokes provided in *Irische Texte* in 1900. It is preferred here because this text is more accessibly

¹⁵¹ Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 12–15.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 317–323.

¹⁵³ Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 205–6.

¹⁵⁴ Ann Dooley and Harry Roe, eds., *Tales of the Elders of Ireland: A New Translation of Acallam na Senórach*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

presented than O'Grady's.¹⁵⁵

3.10.2 The Text

Acallam na Senórach appears in two of the most important manuscripts of early Irish literature. Two versions of the text are contained in Bodleian Library Laud 610 and Rawl B 487. Laud 610 is a composite manuscript in two parts. The first part was written between 1410 and 1452 by an unknown scribe for Séamus Buitiléar (James Butler, the fourth Earl of Ormond). The second half of the manuscript was written, between 1453 and 1454, mainly by Seán Buidhe Ó Cléirigh and Giolla na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin for Edmund Butler, the cousin of James Butler. The text under discussion here is preserved in the part of the manuscript written for Edmund Butler.¹⁵⁶ MS Rawl B 487 is a complete manuscript, but is damaged in significant ways. The main scribe was Finnlaech Ó Cathasaigh who wrote for Sadhbh, the daughter of Tadhg Ó Máille, during the second half of the fifteenth century.¹⁵⁷ Another two versions of the text appear in manuscripts held by the Franciscan Library at Dún Mhuire, Co. Dublin. The first of these is MS A 4, in which the text fills the entire manuscript. This version has been identified as a distinct second recension because of the large variations between it and the Oxford manuscripts. The second manuscript, MS A 20, likewise fills the entire MS. MS A 20 is not a copy of MS A 4 but is sufficiently close to it for scholars to regard them as a pair.¹⁵⁸ The final version of this text is contained in the Book of Lismore, which is described in detail in the next chapter (see Section 4.2.2).

3.10.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

Fíthal appears only once in *Acallam na Senórach*, when St Patrick asks Caoilte if Finn had any brothers. Caoilte tells St Patrick that Finn had two brothers: Fíthal and Cithrumach. After hearing this answer to the question, St Patrick moves on quickly to other matters, leaving the question of Finn's brothers unexplored.

In a sense, Fíthal is mentioned twice in this section: first, in the answer to St Patrick's question, and second, in a small poem which Caoilte sings about the brothers of Finn. But these are bare references which do not give any information about the character of Fíthal within this branch of Irish literature. All we are given is the fact of Fíthal's relationship to Finn. Is

¹⁵⁵Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch, eds., *Irische Texte*, vol. 4, part 1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), p. 16.

¹⁵⁶Brian Ó Cuív, ed., *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001), pp. 62–88. See also R. I. Best, 'Bodleian MS. Laud 610', *Celtica* 3 (1956); Myles Dillon, 'Laud Misc. 610', *Celtica* 5 (1960); Myles Dillon, 'Laud Misc. 610 (cont.)', *Celtica* 6 (1963).

¹⁵⁷Brian Ó Cuív, ed., *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001), pp. 134–141.

¹⁵⁸Myles Dillon, Canice Mooney and Pádraig de Brún, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Franciscan library, Killiney* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1969), pp. 1–10, 40–43.

the reader meant to recall the associations of Fíthal from other contexts, or to accept the name simply as a space-fitter? It would seem from the casual nature of the reference, as St Patrick does not pursue the connection further, that this is a consideration which the author may not have thought serious.¹⁵⁹

3.10.4 Discussion

There are two texts known as ‘The *Acallam*’ in early Irish literature: *Acallam na Senórach* and *Acallam Becc*. The reference to Fíthal in *Acallam na Senórach* is the earliest of many references to Fíthal in connection with Finn. He appears again in poems in *Duanaire Finn* (see Section 4.2), and though he is absent from *Acallam Becc*, he re-appears in the *Duanaire Finn* reworking of the *Acallam Becc* poem on the death of Finn.

It is suggested above that the reference to Fíthal and his connection to Finn is casual. Perhaps, rather, we should say that the author of the piece wanted to attach as many traditional characters to his work as possible, for example, to show his readers his deep antiquarian learning. Adding obscure characters to a tale, even in fleeting references, would confirm to the reader that the author was well-versed in the traditional material. Yes, this solitary reference in the celebrated *Acallam na Senórach* may have been enough to pave the way for Fíthal’s reappearance in the *Duanaire Finn* poems. One fancies that this is by no means an atypical example of how tradition is created and propagated in other works in the early Irish tradition.

The implications of this connection for Nagy’s theory of the liminal nature of Finn and the Fianna are explored anon (see Section 4.2.2.4). The present reference informs the discussion in the later section by demonstrating how a casual connection can grow in importance in the hands of later authors. With respect to Fíthal, his inclusion in *Acallam na Senórach* is as important for his Fenian ‘career’, as the dialogue with Cormac was the development of his character in the historical tales and sagas. The outcome of this particular connection, whether deliberate or casual in origin, was to bring Fíthal into the orbit of Finn and his adventures. If, as seems likely, Fíthal was associated with Cormac mac Airt before the reign of Cormac was chosen as the time-frame for Finn and the Fianna, fitting Fíthal into the Fenian literature would have been the easier to encompass. The question of whether or not the author of *Acallam na Senórach* chose to affiliate Fíthal with Finn in an intimate way is re-visited in the discussion of the whole tradition of Fíthal.

It is always possible that the lack of a contextual reference for Fíthal is itself significant. The casual nature of the reference to him could suggest that the author expected his audience to recognise his name and character without further elaboration, i. e., with the implication that

¹⁵⁹Prof. Gillies has suggested to me that *Fíthal* and *Cithramach* (if associated with *cethram* ‘line of a quatrain’) may have signified, respectively, ‘learning (juridical)’ and ‘learning (poetic)’, as suitable attributes for brothers of Finn viewed as the representative of ‘learning (visionary)’.

Fíthal was well-known by the readers of *Acallam na Senórach*. But the reason for the bare reference could equally, and more probably, have been only that it did not interrupt the flow of the colloquy between Caoilte and St Patrick.

3.11 *Cambrensis Eversus*

Liam Breatnach notes the reference to Fíthal, or rather to *Finnsruth Fíthail*, in John Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus* in a list of Irish legal materials.¹⁶⁰ *Cambrensis Eversus* appeared in 1662, about the same time as Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, and was a reaction to anti-Irish historians of the period.¹⁶¹ Lynch was attempting to salvage the honour of Ireland against the medieval calumnies of Giraldus Cambrensis which were then being used by some historians to plead the case for colonial rule from London.¹⁶² This kind of work, promoting locally based national history against the cavalier versions propagated by centralising authorities, was written elsewhere in Europe at the time.¹⁶³

The list of legal figures and texts was inserted in the work in an attempt to show that early Ireland was not a lawless place of barbarian violence. This offensive defence was directed both at Giraldus Cambrensis and at those who continued to use him as source material in their histories of Ireland. Fíthal was one of those who were included to show that Ireland had a long tradition of law and order and that the charges of Giraldus Cambrensis were baseless.¹⁶⁴ In this context, Fíthal, along with other notable jurists of ancient Ireland, was conscripted to bolster Lynch's argument.

As for the source of the list itself, it is well-known that Lynch was in contact with one of the traditional antiquaries, Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh, who was creating a dictionary of Irish legal terms in Galway in the 1640's but was forced to leave when the city surrendered in 1652.¹⁶⁵ This contact clearly provided Lynch with Irish legal knowledge, among other traditional Irish sources, for use in his work.

¹⁶⁰Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), p. 255. See also *ibid.*, p. 161; John Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. 2, ed. Matthew Kelly (Dublin: NP, 1850).

¹⁶¹Hiram Morgan, 'The Island Defenders: Humanist Patriots in Early Modern Iceland and Ireland', in Gudmundur Hálfðanarson and Anne Kathrine Isaacs, eds., *Nations and Nationalities in Historical Perspective* (Pisa: University of Pisa, 2001). See also Colin Kidd, 'Gaelic Antiquity and National Identity in Enlightenment Ireland and Scotland', *English Historical Review* 109 (1994) and John Silke, 'Irish Scholarship and the Renaissance, 1580–1673', *Studies in the Renaissance* 20 (1973).

¹⁶²Hiram Morgan, 'The Island Defenders: Humanist Patriots in Early Modern Iceland and Ireland', in Gudmundur Hálfðanarson and Anne Kathrine Isaacs, eds., *Nations and Nationalities in Historical Perspective* (Pisa: University of Pisa, 2001), p. 226.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 225–226.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 232–233.

¹⁶⁵William O'Sullivan, 'The Book of Domhnaill Ó Duibhdábhóireann, Provenance and Codicology', *Celtica* 23 (1999), pp. 277–8. See also, Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *The Celebrated Antiquary Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh (c. 1600–1671): His Lineage, Life, and Learning* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1996), pp. 100–101, 108–109.

The signification of this reference to *Finnsruth Fíthail* is less clear. Fíthal himself is merely alluded to by name. But even the mention of FF would seem to indicate that Fíthal was still a known figure as long as native Irish antiquities survived. As with much about Fíthal, it is a fleeting glimpse, but it is testimony to his continued presence even in the last days of the native learning.

3.12 Foras Feasa ar Éirinn

The last purely Irish prose source for Fíthal is Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*.¹⁶⁶ The *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* is the literary distillation of a wide spectrum of early Irish tradition. Within this monumental work, Fíthal appears only twice. As Colin Ireland notes,¹⁶⁷ Keating includes the most widely-known story concerning Fíthal.¹⁶⁸ The other occurrence is in an oblique reference to the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*.¹⁶⁹ The first reference to Fíthal introduces him on his death-bed. He calls his son Flaithrí to him and gives him four important instructions: do not nurse or foster a king's son; do not give secrets to your wife; do not raise the status of a serf's son; do not give treasure or money to his sister. Once Fíthal has died, Flaithrí flouts all four of these admonitions. However, each breach of Fíthal's advice places him in greater danger, and Flaithrí barely escapes with his life. The second reference by Keating includes Fíthal as one of the compilers of the *Senchas Már*. He is included in a large list of the presumed chief authors of the *Senchas Már* from age to age, which tends to coincide with names in *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* (see Section 4.1.3.4) and continues the long antiquarian tradition of listing important categories of information.

3.12.1 Previous Scholarship

Keating's first reference to Fíthal is given the name of *Cetheoir Comairli Fithail* by Roland Smith in his commentary on the *Speculum Principis* in Irish tradition.¹⁷⁰ Smith wrestles with the story and writes: 'it is closely bound up with the *Senbriathra* tradition; whether it is of modern growth or whether it has its roots in antiquity it is impossible to say.'¹⁷¹ In fact, from the vantage point of modern scholarship, it is possible to say as will be explained below. Bernadette Cunningham does not refer directly to Fíthal in her study of Keating, but her broad outline of

¹⁶⁶Geoffrey Keating, 'History of Ireland', ed. and trans. P. S. Dinneen, 4 vols. (London: Irish Texts Society, 1901–1908).

¹⁶⁷Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), p. 51.

¹⁶⁸Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. and trans. P. S. Dinneen, vol. 2, pp. 339–343.

¹⁶⁹Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. and trans. P. S. Dinneen, vol. 3, p. 35.

¹⁷⁰Roland Mitchell Smith, 'The *Speculum Principum* in Early Irish Literature', *Speculum* 2 (1927), p. 431.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*

Keating's life, the influences on his work, and its impact on later Irish writing, are important for understanding the general significance of *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*.¹⁷²

3.12.2 The Text

Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, 'Compendium of Wisdom about Ireland', was completed circa 1634, only a few years after the completion (circa 1631) of his *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis*, 'Three Shafts of Death'.¹⁷³ There are now no known copies of the text of *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* in Keating's own hand, but it was extensively copied throughout Ireland, the earliest known manuscript copy being British Library Egerton MS 107, on 17 October 1638 by Flaithrí Ó Duibhgeannáin in Castlefore, Co. Leitrim.¹⁷⁴ The only critical edition of Keating to date is the Irish Text Society edition by Fr. Patrick Dinneen, compiler of the great Irish Dictionary.¹⁷⁵

3.12.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

Over the years that writers had deployed Fíthal in their prose tales and stories, he represented the Irish legal system. Keating's use of Fíthal comes within his overall aim of projecting an image of an orderly society. Fíthal is well suited to this role as a wisdom-figure and a judge.¹⁷⁶ As is explained in more detail in Chapter 6, Keating realised that law, wisdom, and order were encapsulated in the character of Fíthal. To that end, Keating resurrected Fíthal's wisdom figure status and the format of the dialogue with one of his sons. In this deathbed scene he deliberately imitated *Audacht Morainn*, and Fíthal's advice was made to deliver a warning against ignoring the advice of elders. By resuscitating Fíthal's earliest character as a wisdom figure, Keating was able simultaneously to make his moral point and to breathe fresh life into an aspect of the early Irish tradition.

The second context within which Fíthal appears is in a list of the chief authors of early Irish law. Keating here seems to draw on *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* (see Section 4.1.3), which credits Fíthal as an author of early Irish law who helped form the basis for the *Senchas Már*.¹⁷⁷ To seventeenth-century readers who were increasingly unfamiliar with the old literary tradition, the location of Fíthal among the authors of the *Senchas Már* would have anchored his connection with the legal tradition, while the story of his death-bed advice would have given some flesh to his character and located it within the wisdom literature.

¹⁷²Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 173–174.

¹⁷⁵Geoffrey Keating, 'History of Ireland', ed. and trans. P. S. Dinneen, 4 vols. (London: Irish Texts Society, 1908).

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 159–161.

¹⁷⁷Geoffrey Keating, 'History of Ireland', ed. and trans. P. S. Dinneen, vol. 2, p. 35.

3.12.4 Discussion

In his edition of *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*, Colin Ireland notes this episode focusing upon the similarity of the advice given by Fíthal to Flaithrí, and that given by Cremthann Nia Náir in *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó*.¹⁷⁸ In addition to this general connection, Fíthal was also credited with dispensing wisdom concerning women in the N recension of *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (for more information see Section 3.5). This advice about women may have been known by Keating; knowing it would certainly have been useful in drawing together the strands of the story.

In addition to the wisdom literature aspect of the story, there is a legal background to the advice he gives, though it is disguised as general advice. The incentive to foster a king's son was great, being worth up to 30 *séts*.¹⁷⁹ The amount of the reward, however, is offset by the responsibility incurred; for a king's son was, by the nature of his position, conspicuous. The admonition to Flaithrí not to tell his wife secrets has a solid early Irish legal basis. Normally, a woman's testimony and oath are considered invalid;¹⁸⁰ in the case of secrets, however, her oath was worth a sack of grain.¹⁸¹

In Keating's other reference to Fíthal, he appears in a long list of mythological guardians and authors of the law.¹⁸² The list comes directly after Keating's account of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már* (see Section 3.8), at the point where St Patrick has accepted the law under the new faith. As noted above, it draws substantially from *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* and its effect is to reinforce the image of Fíthal as a judge of Irish law in the time of Cormac mac Airt.

There is one anomaly in Keating's story about Fíthal. *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* has Fíthal living until the reign of Lóegaire, the high king at the time of St Patrick's mission. Keating has Fíthal dying during the reign of Cormac mac Airt and Fíthal's son fostering Cormac's son in defiance of Fíthal's advice. This reminds us that Keating did not merely copy from his sources directly into *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*: 'his creative impulse lay in the selection and adaptation of material for re-telling, the style of language he employed, and the interlinking of diverse materials into a readable form.'¹⁸³

The most striking lesson to be drawn from these references is Keating's deep knowledge

¹⁷⁸Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), p. 51. See also *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó*, ed. by Rudolf Thurneysen (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1935 [reprint 1975]).

¹⁷⁹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 87.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 202–203.

¹⁸¹T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen and D. B. Walters, eds., *Lawyers and Laymen: Studies in the History of Law Presented to Professor Dafydd Jenkins on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986), p. 220, §59.

¹⁸²Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. and trans. P. S. Dinneen, vol. 3, 33–34.

¹⁸³Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 122.

and command of his source material. He was able to rehabilitate a minor character such as Fíthal, correctly diagnosing and accurately transforming the traditional associations and thus preserved knowledge of this enigmatic character.

3.13 Archaeological Evidence For Fíthal?

In 1881, Whitley Stokes¹⁸⁴ drew attention to an inscribed plate recovered from an Iron Age grave near Milan in Northern Italy.¹⁸⁵ Stokes suggested that the etched word UTILIOS could be an ancient form of the word for Fíthal. The only other reference to this particular item we have found is in a collection of ancient inscriptions.¹⁸⁶ According to this work, the inscription is from a plate found in a La Tène II grave in Alzate, which is south-east of Como near Milan, Italy.¹⁸⁷

Philologically speaking, UTILIOS corresponds fairly well with the common Latin name *Vitellius*, and does not correspond so well with the Irish *Fíthal* (alternative early spelling *Fíthel*), which seems to reflect a pre-form like *Vitalos or *Vitelos. In practical terms, of course, there is no way of linking the owner of the prehistoric Italian plate with the medieval Irish jurist, even if one could substantiate a philological link. We can therefore eliminate this item from our enquiry.

3.14 Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae

The *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* contains the genealogies of most of the major figures in Irish Hagiography.¹⁸⁸ It is contained within the Book of Leinster (TCD MS 1339). Within this, there appears a list of bishops beginning with St Patrick, usually with the letter ‘E’ (standing for *episcopus* or *epscop* prefixed to the name). The name Fíthal appears as the 198th entry in the list of bishops. The entry contains no contextualising information to help us understand its purpose.¹⁸⁹

As Fíthal is normally associated with the pre-Patrician past, the name as it appears in this list is most unlikely to be the Fíthal we have been discussing, unless the author of the list, after running out of names from hagiographical sources, began to insert names culled from

¹⁸⁴Whitley Stokes, ‘Review of *Contribuzioni allo studio della epigrafia etrusca*’, *Revue Celtique* 5 (1881–1883), pp. 228–229.

¹⁸⁵For a current sceptical view of Iron Age archaeology, see John Collis, *The Celts: Origins, Myths, and Inventions* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003), pp. 71–92.

¹⁸⁶Joshua Whatmough, ed., *The Prae-Italic Dialects of Italy*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 98.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸Pádraig Ó Riain, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985).

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 135.

other sources to pad out the list. It remains possible, of course, that there was a man with the name Fíthal either in history or in hagiographical or other sources no longer extant. We cannot eliminate either possibility at present.

3.15 Aí Emnach

As with so much of early Irish law, only a few fragments of this text, which is connected to Fíthal, survive. One reference to it occurs in a later prologue of the *Senchas Már*¹⁹⁰ and another in verse 34 of *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* (see Section 4.1.3).¹⁹¹ The only direct quotation extant is in the commentary of the *Senchas Már* which concerns distraint and gives the fines for unlawful distraint.¹⁹²

3.16 Conclusion

As can be seen from the foregoing discussions, the literary conception and deployment of early Irish law appear to have varied from one narrative to another. The author of *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*, for example, merely passed on a tradition concerning the first written version of early Irish law, ‘Decision as to Cormac’s Sword’, which may have been used by him to establish Cormac’s credentials in the mind of his intended audience. While *Bruiden na hAlmaine* is generically part of the Fenian literature, it shows slightly more sophistication in its treatment of legal matters. At the same time, however, it parallels the usage of certain authors of poems in *Duanaire Finn* who use Fíthal as a device to mitigate the impact of the *fianna*’s illegal actions. His mere mention, which gave rise to the genealogical poem in *Duanaire Finn*, demonstrates how even the briefest notations in earlier material can form the basis for great elaboration in later works. The author of the ‘Decision as to Cormac’s Sword’, in contrast to the other stories, used the law as the primary motivation for the plot. Nevertheless, he has a tale to tell, and his ‘bottom line’ is a literary one. This explains why he does not include reference to the amount of the fine that would normally have applied to Fíthal for the theft of his sword, but chooses instead to make the abstract presence of the law and the adjudication of Fíthal the mainspring of the story. Again, the author of ‘Cormac’s Dream’ seemed to be concerned to explain Cormac’s half-brother Nia’s anomalous position in the regnal list of Connacht, using the exile of Cormac as a framework within which to craft his tale. The only text which directly relates to Fíthal’s role as a wisdom figure is ‘Advice for Finding a Good Wife’, where Fíthal advises his son

¹⁹⁰CIH 360.1, 1439.2, and 1670.30.

¹⁹¹Peter Smith, ‘*Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*: A Middle-Irish Poem on the Authors and Laws of Ireland’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994), p. 129,136.

¹⁹²Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 163–164.

about the best and worst type of woman he could marry. Ironically, it is because of this, and the attribution of gnomic sayings to Fíthal in the Book of Leinster that were possibly written by another historical person (see Section 3.5.1), that Fíthal is remembered in Irish tradition as a wisdom figure, and provides the basis for the story of Fíthal and Flaithrí in Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*.

Two outlying sources were included in this chapter: an Iron Age plate from Northern Italy and an early reference to a Bishop Fíthal. The connection between the plate and a mythological lawyer from Medieval Ireland appears to be non-existent, and 'Bishop Fíthal' is enigmatic inasmuch as we can detect no clear association with the mythological lawyer and no hagiographical information to clarify the connection.

The case of Fíthal contains some important lessons about the depiction of early Irish law in Irish literature. First, an author often moulds his story to cater to his intended audience. Even the most sophisticated depictions of early Irish law, in *Bruiden na hAlmaine* and the 'Decision as to Cormac's Sword', present only the outlines of early Irish legal procedures, and they often smooth out the procedural manoeuvring in the interest of streamlining the storyline. However, the authors of these two stories both show a nuanced awareness of the working of the legal system. In the case of *Bruiden na hAlmaine*, the author states, through Flaithrí, the difference between a 'lump-blow' and bloodshed. While the physical difference between a blow that does not raise a bruise and one that causes bloodshed is obvious, the author's use of the legal distinction shows that he was aware of this less-than-obvious detail. In the case of 'Decision as to Cormac's Sword', the author shows awareness of the relative weight assigned to crimes in complex cases in his treatment of the fines imposed on those who stole Fíthal's sword.

Even in these more sophisticated treatments of the law, none of the stories presented here engages with the crucial procedural aspect of which 'path of judgement' to take. The omission is striking because of the organisational importance of this step, which governs not only what the court is being asked to hear, but also how the court will hear it.¹⁹³ In the 'Decision as to Cormac's Sword', when Socht abruptly changes tactics this should, strictly speaking, incur a fine. But this is not noted by the author. The author is, by definition, the one who takes the decisions about what to include in his narrative. He may choose to omit or include material for literary or dramatic reasons, among others. This may explain why our authors have played down legal or legalistic details in favour of achieving literary and (or) dramatic effects. This factor limits our power to estimate the amount of early Irish law an author truly knew. In all the cases presented here, the author has jumped from the declaration of a law suit to the oral arguments before the court. This could be a stratagem to move quickly to the more dramatic phase of the oral arguments. It could be to spare the reader the legal complexities or it could be

¹⁹³Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: From Court to Custom in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 116–126.

that the author himself did not understand the intricacies of procedure in a trial. Without more information about individual authors and their backgrounds, which are almost wholly missing from the early Irish record, it is not possible to determine which of the foregoing alternatives is nearest to the mark.

As for Fíthal himself, he has a dual character as judge and poet. In the prose texts discussed above, he is sometimes described as a poet, sometimes as a judge, and sometimes as both. To add to the complexity, PHP contains the myth noticed above concerning the separation of the poetical and judicial functions, which supposedly took place during the period between Conchobar and St Patrick, when Fíthal was supposed to have lived. But we cannot expect literal consistency throughout the tradition. The myth merely signals that there had been an issue with regard to the functions of lawmen and poets, presumably taking place soon after the conversion to Christianity and presumably making itself felt at the level of the *literati* and churchmen. Perhaps the variety of guises adopted by Fíthal is a reflex of that issue; certainly it is likelier to have been that way around than the opposite. In any event, the perception of both medieval and modern scholars is to emphasise the undivided nature of learning, including the poetic and judicial functions, in pre-Christian Ireland. Viewed in that light, the alternating roles of Fíthal may be seen simply as different facets of an archetypal learned character.¹⁹⁴

What does the evidence collected in this chapter tell us about Fíthal? According to Colin Ireland: ‘...he was undeniably venerated as a poet and wise judge throughout Irish cultural history.’¹⁹⁵ This is a view amply confirmed by the further treatment presented in this and the following chapter.

¹⁹⁴T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘The Context and Uses of Literacy in Early Christian Ireland’, in Huw Pryce, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹⁹⁵Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhínamaic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 51–52.

Chapter 4

Fíthal in Poetry

Whereas the previous chapter chronicled the appearances of Fíthal in prose texts, this chapter aims to accomplish the same for his appearance in poetry. However, the organisation of this chapter is slightly different to the last: while retaining our presentational structure with its four-fold division for each individual text, the poems which mention Fíthal are grouped by type. For instance, Fíthal appears in various poems in early Irish legal texts. These are grouped together under the heading ‘Legal Poetry’; but they are then analysed in the same manner as the texts in the previous chapter. Poems which do not conform to any type are grouped under the heading ‘Miscellaneous’. This principle of organisation is appropriate for the poetry, since it seems to fall naturally into generic types, whereas the nature of the prose works is more varied. The poetry involving Fíthal is of three general types: Fenian material taken from *Duanaire Finn*; informational and instructional material from practitioners of early Irish law, for instance, *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* and miscellaneous poetic items, from such sources as the *Metrical Dindshenchas* and, the Classical Early Modern Irish poem, *Ag so chugad, a Chormaic*.

While these poems are all important for the determination of Fíthal’s place in early Irish literature, the *Immacallamh Cormaic ocus Fíthail* is introduced separately in its own chapter. Not only does this poem need a new edition, but its importance in the corpus of Fíthal-related literature calls for a more detailed analysis than the rest of the corpus. This would sit oddly with the other poetry if it were placed within the same chapter.

The poetry in this chapter displays some of the same tendencies as the prose works analysed in chapter 3. Among these are the use of Fíthal as a stratagem for introducing a legal element into a plot, e. g. to extricate Finn from legal complications stemming from the actions of his band or himself. The person and character of Fíthal, however, are not fully explored by the poets, with the exception of a genealogy arising from a connection made in *Acallam na Senórach*, which receives a full treatment in Chapter 6. In general, the poetic authors seem to indicate that their choice to include Fíthal within a plot is determined by one or both of the

following two factors: the dramatic need to extricate their characters from situations with a legal or political dimension, as will be shown in the cases of *Ag so chugad*, a *Chormaic* and *Fíthal*'s *roscad* judgement; and a desire to instruct a readership, which in some cases may have included students of the law in the manner and method of learning the law.

4.1 *Fíthal* in Legal Poetry

The style of the extant early Irish law tracts seems to indicate that there were two forms of presentation: as *fénechas* or 'sung' poetry; and as plain prose. Often prose and poetry are freely mixed within the explanatory prose envelope which wrapped the core of the envelope. This organisational feature led earlier scholars to assume that the *fénechas* (also known as *roscad*) style was an earlier, more archaic form than the prose in the early Irish law tracts, with the implication that the *fénechas*, being more ancient, was authoritative. However, the matter is not so simple; modern scholars have demonstrated that some of these *roscada* are contemporaneous with the author.¹

4.1.1 *Fíthal*'s *Roscad* Judgement in Favour of Cormac

One of the problems with early Irish law is that there is no case law to provide insights into the detailed workings of the early Irish courts or, indeed, to validate the existence of a legal system in early Ireland. What does remain are 'mythological leading cases', which are judgements or dooms placed in the mouth of mythological characters. The only surviving records of pleadings before an Irish court come from the sixteenth century, and, since we have no other means of authenticating such proceedings, this raises the question of the applicability of the early Irish law corpus.²

In the case of *Fíthal*, the fact that a 'mythological leading case' was ascribed to him is evidence of his importance to early Irish jurists in the Old Irish period. The context within which the judgement survives is also illustrative of the random nature of text preservation. The story from which this judgement derives is in the fifteenth-century Book of Fermoy, but the judgement itself appears separately in a sixteenth-century digest of early Irish law. Both of these sources bear witness to a tradition of an alternative death story for Cormac mac Airt.

The *roscad* itself is *Fíthal*'s judgement in favour of Cormac, after Cormac loses his eye in an attack upon him by a rival in his seat at Tara. *Fíthal* accords the midlands of Ireland to Cormac in recompense for this outrage against him.

¹Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, 'The Laws of the Irish', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

²Nerys Patterson, 'Brehon Law in Late Medieval Ireland: "Antiquarian and Obsolete" or "Traditional and Functional"?', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 17 (1989).

Fíthal firgæoth mac ængusa maic muiredaig maic reth asbert an breith-so iar coll
sula cormaic, curab inn dorochair descert mbreagh a ndilsi do chormac 7 dia sil.³

Fíthal truly wise, son of Angus son of Muiredach son of Reth pronounced this
judgement after the loss of Cormac's eye, so that it was in [respect of that judging]
that Southern Brega became the property of Cormac and his descendants.

The *roscad* fills a good portion of the space in the digest, which discusses the use of land as payment for criminal actions, and forms the heart of the argument. The text also contains interjections made by a later commentator.

4.1.1.1 Previous Scholarship

Scholarship was in agreement throughout most of the twentieth century that the poems marked as *roscad* in the sources of early Irish law were among the earliest native sources for medieval Ireland. This argument was predicated on two firmly held beliefs: that the alliterative style was a mark of poetry that had been created for memorisation; and that the feature known as *tnesis*, where the preverb is separated from its main verb, was a diagnostic feature of this style of poetry. While these features are often present and a few poems marked as *roscad* are still inscrutable to scholars, the assumption of the necessary antiquity of this poetic form has been challenged by scholars in the last twenty years.⁴ It has been demonstrated that certain *roscada* are contemporaneous with their surrounding text and are thus not as old as was previously thought. This lets us ask whether late Old Irish scribes were actively involved in the composition of these texts, rather than being the mere stenographers of an earlier tradition.

Scholarship relating to this particular text is thin. The diplomatic text of the poem appears in Binchy's *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*.⁵ The text also appears in Liam Breatnach's index to the *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, which covers its attribution to Fíthal as well as the general context within which it appears in the digest.⁶ There seems to be no other reference in the scholarly literature to this particular poem.

³CIH 1144.7–9.

⁴Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, 'The Laws of the Irish', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984). See also, Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984); Liam Breatnach, 'The Ecclesiastical Element in the Old-Irish Legal Tract *Cáin Fhuithirbe*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986); Liam Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar: The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987).

⁵CIH 1144.7–19.

⁶Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 364–365.

4.1.1.2 The Text

The text of the digest of early Irish law is contained in the first six pages of RIA MS 23 Q 6. It dates from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and emanates from a Mac Áedagáin school of Irish law. The manuscript as a whole is a composite which was brought together at a later date. The first six pages of the manuscript are described separately from the rest and comprise Section A in the *Royal Irish Academy Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts*. What is remarkable about this small section is the number of ascriptions in the margins of the text. There are five scribes for this one short section: Donnchadh from An Ghraínseach in 1575, Domhnall, Giolla na Naomh, Saordálach Óg mac Diarmada in ‘1475’ (a scribal error for 1575?), and Gabrial mac Conchobhair Ó Deorain in 1577.⁷ The number of scribes for this one text could be explained by the fact that the manuscript was composed at a school of native Irish law and that this section was given to these students in turn as an exercise.

The text of the *roscad* passage contains enough early forms to allow us to assume that it was composed within the Old Irish period. While the language of the judgement is not in doubt, the style of the judgement is different from other law pronouncements of this type. *Roscada* are generally couched in highly alliterative, non-rhyming verse-forms which are often unamenable to translation and display archaic syntax and word formation. This *roscad* does not show any of those features but is a relatively straightforward Old Irish poem with a high concentration of chevilles. The preceding text refers to the poem only as a judgement, and gives no indication of any other special feature in any way.

4.1.1.3 *Fíthal* in the Context of This Text

There are two contexts in this text within which the figure of *Fíthal* operates: as an actor in the supporting narrative, and as the author of the *roscad* itself. The surrounding text is a digest of early Irish law which gives the judge and lawyer quick access to legal precedents and was possibly used in actual courts of law. The *roscad* appears in the part of the digest which covers the transfer of the ownership of land in cases where illegal acts have been alleged. At this level, *Fíthal* is held up as an authoritative source (possibly) for practising lawyers in later medieval Ireland. As for the judgement itself, the reader would need to be familiar with the circumstances of the case for *Fíthal*’s judgement to be understood. This would require the reader to think of *Fíthal* not merely as the author of the judgement in this case, but as a character within the original event, or the account of an event. The two contexts are intertwined within the text. On the one hand, *Fíthal* was a judge of early Irish law who adjudicated a ‘mythological leading case’, which was sufficiently important to include within the digest. On the other hand, he was an actor within the story that contains the judgement.

⁷*Royal Irish Academy Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy), pp. 3340-1.

4.1.1.4 Discussion

The unfortunate absence from early Irish law of a body of proper case law has limited our power to assess the effectiveness of the early Irish legal system. While there is no case law, strictly defined, there are stories of judgements extant within the early Irish legal material, which are sometimes termed ‘mythological leading cases’ by modern scholars. These cases are usually set in an earlier time and use characters from early Irish literature to explicate a point of early Irish law. It is important to note, in regard to Fíthal, that Cormac mac Airt also had a ‘mythological leading case’ ascribed to him. This leading case was recycled by a later poet in reference to Cormac and Fíthal (see Section 4.2.3.4). Thus, these cases were not only part of the legal tradition but also a source of inspiration for *literati* of a later period. Again, however, because of the lack of non-mythological case law, the impact of these leading cases on real practising lawyers is impossible to quantify on the basis of the surviving material.

In this instance, the *roscad* is the mythological leading case which underpins the situation in which land could be forfeited as payment of fines for injuring a person unlawfully. In normal circumstances, the law tract *Bretha Déin Chécht* ‘Judgements of Déin Chécht’, which describes the various payments for injury and the various divisions of the payment which are due to the attending doctor, would be used to determine the *éraicc* ‘fine’ required to compensate for the injury.⁸ However, when the amount of the fine exigible under this law was more than the guilty could pay, any land possessed by him and his kin would come into consideration. The *roscad* gives the mythological precedent for this type of judgement. While the technical details need not detain us here, it is important to note what is really significant about this *roscad*, i. e. the prominent position accorded to Fíthal in the digest.

It is worth pausing briefly at this point to explain how the normal valuation of an injury would have proceeded under the terms of early Irish law. Using this case as the basis for analysis, if Cormac lost his eye and sued, litigation would have to appeal to *Bretha Déin Chécht* as described above. There are two relevant sections of this tract which state:

§21. An eye or an ear: if it be one of them, half of the penalty for the head is paid; if it be both of them it is full wergild [ogheraicc]. . .⁹

§32. [The compensation for] permanent disfigurement extends to [that for] death where there is a formidable blemish if it cannot be removed.¹⁰

The implication of this is that Cormac would receive his full honour-price for the slight to his honour. Additionally, the attending doctor would receive half of that figure as payment,

⁸D. A. Binchy, ‘Bretha Déin Chécht’, *Ériu* 20 (1966), pp. 1–66.

⁹Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 43.

which would be exacted on top of Cormac's honour-price, which would be fourteen *cumals* according to the highest honour-price given in the laws.¹¹ When this could not be paid, Fíthal's mythological precedent would then cause land owned by the guilty party to become available for settlement, as in modern legal systems.

As the *roscad* states, Fíthal renders a judgement that gives the free and unfree clients of the southern Bregian plain to Cormac:

suthain ræd ... a torchuir leath mbreaghmaige/ .i. a leth a ndæra. 7 a leth a særaicillnecht.¹²

An eternal/perpetual item ... in which (= whereby) half of the Bregian plain fell (= was forfeited) i. e. half of it in base clientship and half in free clientship.

Given the fact that the fine is rather large and the judgement is in the context of land as payment for crimes, it can be assumed that it is not solely the output of the clients that is transferred, but the land itself.

At this point in the analysis, it would be easy to dismiss the amount of the fine as a literary exaggeration or a tendentious claim by the author of the piece. Yet this judgement appears in a digest of early Irish law rather than a literary tale, and was presumably consulted in some sense by practising lawyers and judges as a 'mythological leading case' forming part of the 'authority' of early Irish law. Thus, it is difficult to dismiss the judgement altogether.

The mythical political situation that is revealed in the *Extract from the Book of Fermoy* (see Section 3.2) is also relevant to this discussion. The epitome of that story recounted how Cormac sent Fíthal around Ireland to rouse Cormac's allies for an attack on his foes. This met with refusal but a pension was offered instead. Cormac then proceeded to a gathering of the men of Ireland, presumably to seek redress, though the extract does not mention a judgement. However, given the common assumption that legal judgements were given at regional gatherings, it is possible that Fíthal delivered the judgement detailed here in the gathering at which Cormac attempted to regain his kingship. This would neatly fit both the circumstances described in the epitome and the political situation inferable from the present text.

Finally, the poem reinforces and helps to explain the closeness we perceive between Fíthal and Cormac. When Cormac lost his eye, retribution had to follow. When his allies would not act, Fíthal could and did. If we take the epitome and the present poem together, we receive the clear message that rendering judgement could be a determinedly political process. When physical retaliation was unavailable to Cormac, his judge and the authority of the law helped him gain satisfaction for the wrong that he had suffered.

¹¹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 17–18.

¹²CIH 1144.15–17.

4.1.2 An Address to a Student of Law

This poem was written by Giolla na Naomh mac Duinn Shléibhe, the leading Irish jurist, in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The poem was meant as a didactic tool for law students and consists of a list of texts which the pupil is urged to memorise in order to become a successful lawyer and judge.¹³

4.1.2.1 Previous Scholarship

The poem is published in a diplomatic transcription by D. A. Binchy.¹⁴ The latest edition of the poem is that of Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha.¹⁵

4.1.2.2 The Text

The text is taken from two manuscripts, TCD MS H.4.22 (= 1363) and British Library MS Additional 19,995. MS H.4.22 is a composite piece written at various times and thus a date cannot be ascribed by manuscript source, but two-thirds of the MS were written by the Mac Aodhagáin family or by scribes in their employ and partly in Ormond. The poem itself appears on page 85 in the hand of Cosnamhach Mac Aodhagáin. BL Additional 19,995 is a fifteenth-century fragment of vellum. The poem is on the recto and verso of folio 3. In addition to the two manuscripts above, a single stanza of the poem is found on NLI Dublin MS G1 on folio 72v7 written by Pilip Ballach Ó Duibhgeannáin between 1579 and 1584.¹⁶

The poem's author, Giolla na Naomh mac Duinn Shléibhe, has been identified by the editor as the same person as Gilla na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin who died in 1309, according to the annals.¹⁷ This seems reasonable, given that there is no evidence for a suitable character with the patronymic Mac Duinn Shléibhe, and that one of the manuscripts that contains a full version of the poem is connected directly to the Mac Aodhagáin family.¹⁸

4.1.2.3 *Fíthal* in the Context of This Text

Establishing a context for *Fíthal* within this text is problematic for two reasons. First, he is mentioned only once within the poem, and this brief mention leaves little information upon which to form an impression. Second, the reference is very obscure in regard to *Fíthal*. The poet

¹³Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, 'An Address to a Student of Law', in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, eds., *Sages, Saints, and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), pp. 159–177.

¹⁴CIH 1584.1–1585.8

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 159–161.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 160–161.

urges his reader to remember what Fíthal instructed Flaithrí ‘in particular books’, but leaves the reader with the task of identifying which ‘books’ are meant.

4.1.2.4 Discussion

‘8. Keep in mind noble Fíthal’s charge to Flaithre (sic) who pacified hosts, since it is found in particular books, memorise it and guard it still’.¹⁹ The editor attributes this to a wisdom text featuring Fíthal and his son, Flaithrí, without exploring the possible name or contents of the text to which the poet refers.²⁰ The editor ascribes stanzas 8, 10, and 11 to *speculum* texts, but this can only be confirmed in the case of stanza 10, which refers to *Tecosca Cormaic* by naming the two participants as Cormac and Cairpre. We are forced to guess the source of stanza 11, because Morann and Neire are linked both in *Audacht Morainn* and in the last two-thirds of the *Bretha Nemed Toísech*, though the latter is a law tract rather than a *speculum* text.

As to stanza 8, the only recorded instance in Irish literature where Fíthal gives *speculum*-style instruction to his son, Flaithrí, is in Keating’s *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (see Section 3.12). It could be argued that Giolla na Naomh mac Duinn Shléibhe is referring to a medieval text no longer extant in which Fíthal instructed Flaithrí in wisdom, and that Keating used this tradition as the basis for his story about Flaithrí. This is plausible in view of the advice given to Flaithrí about not telling secrets to his wife (see Section 3.5) and the general nature of the advice to Flaithrí by Fíthal. Thus, it is possible that there are links between ‘Advice for Finding a Good Wife’ and this text, and that those are hinted at by the poem under discussion here.

Another possibility is that, if the reference in stanza 11 was to *Bretha Nemed Toísech* rather than to *Audacht Morainn*, the reference to Fíthal and Flaithrí was intended to bring to mind *Finn̄sruth Fíthail* or *Aí Emnach*. But since a commentator identifies the interlocutor of *Finn̄sruth Fíthail* as Fíthal’s son Socht, such an identification would be unwise without more concrete evidence. *Aí Emnach* is the only other legal text associated with Fíthal; it is now lost, there is no way of knowing now whether Fíthal and Flaithrí appeared in that text. The identification of the text referred to by Giolla na Naomh therefore falls short of certainty, but is perhaps most likely to have been an earlier version of the tradition accessed by Keating.

There is perhaps a connection between this text and the *roscad* poem above, based upon marginal note in RIA MS 23 Q 6 ascribing the first section of the MS to Giolla na Naomh, who is also credited with having penned this poem. The connection is that the *roscad* poem was also written in a Mac Aodhagáin-connected school. However, the nature of this connection is as yet elusive. But although there is not enough evidence to enable us to explain the connection

¹⁹Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, ‘An Address to a Student of Law’, in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, eds., *Sages, Saints, and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), p. 169.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 162.

in detail, the indication is that *Fíthal* may have been of special interest to members of the Mac Aodhagáin law school.

4.1.3 *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*

This poem, possibly composed by Gilla in Choimded Úa Cormaic, lists eleven traditional authors of early Irish law. It includes a brief genealogy for each author and, for a few, a description of the physical manifestations of their giving incorrect judgements. Integrated into the poem are traditions generated by the Christianising of early Irish law. These include St Patrick's endorsement of early Irish law after editing it with a committee,²¹ and an account of how the authors of early Irish law were filled with the Holy Spirit. It also contains a condensed version of the tale of how the judges were separated from the poets by the poets' use of unintelligible technical language when arguing their cases. The last section of the poem ascribes law texts to their authors.

4.1.3.1 Previous Scholarship

The prose preface and several of the quatrains from this poem were previously published by Liam Breatnach in his investigation into ecclesiastical influence upon Irish law.²² R. A. S. Macalister,²³ W. Reeves,²⁴ and I. Henderson and E. Okasha²⁵ mention the monumental stones of the monastery of Tullylease.

4.1.3.2 The Text

Peter Smith, the latest editor of the poem, places it circa 1050–1150 on the grounds that the only other poem ascribed to the poet is found in the Book of Leinster, which would give a *terminus ante quem* of circa 1160. At the other end of the scale, he estimates the earliest date on the basis of the prologue and its connection to the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már* and by reference to linguistic data from the poem itself, which would seem to suggest a *terminus post quem* in the mid-eleventh century. All the dating methods available to the editor are inexact but, in the absence of precise information, they give a reasonably limited time-frame for the poem's composition.²⁶

²¹One wonders if this is an imitation of the Roman tradition of the 'committee of ten' who edited Roman law.

²²Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984), pp. 439–42.

²³R. A. S. Macalister, ed., *Corpus Inscriptionum Celticarum*, vol. 2 (Dublin: NP, 1949).

²⁴W. Reeves, 'St. Beretchert of Tullylease', *Ulster Journal of Archeology* 6 (1858).

²⁵I. Henderson and E. Okasha, 'The Early Christian Inscribed and Carved Stones of Tullylease, Co. Cork', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1992).

²⁶Peter Smith, '*Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*: A Middle-Irish Poem on the Authors and Laws of Ireland', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994), p. 124.

4.1.3.3 *Fíthal* in the Context of This Text

Fíthal is a member of the list of mythical authors of early Irish law. His connection to Cormac mac Airt is mentioned, and his genealogy is given before the poet moves on to other, equally shadowy figures. The poet's aim was to refer summarily to key points regarding the origins of Irish law, and the purpose of the poem was to provide an *aide memoire* for students of the subject. Accordingly, the poet gives pertinent information relating to his subject, such as *Fíthal*'s genealogy and his lifespan, by reference to the high kings of Ireland who were his contemporaries, to provide a stimulus to the student to recall everything that they have learnt about the subject, in this case *Fíthal*'s life and legacy.

4.1.3.4 Discussion

As tends to happens with poems containing enumerations and lists, which were very common in Irish tradition, this text illuminates *Fíthal*'s career in only a fitful way. There is no space for a detailed account, if the poet is to complete his appointed task: namely to catalogue notable characters for memorisation by students of early Irish law. The connection to the monastery of Tullylease, which could be in Co. Cork or Co. Down, has been held to strengthen this view.²⁷

The poem states that *Fíthal* was the eleventh great author of Ireland, and that he lived from the reign of Cormac, who was normally assigned a third-century reign by the synchronists,²⁸ to the reign of Lóegaire, who is given a reign in the fifth century, contemporaneous St Patrick. However, even if we make allowance for poetic or genealogical licence, it is hard to see why *Fíthal* was made to outlive Cormac by this length of time. Possibly, the poet was attempting to cover the time from the end of Cormac's reign until the coming of St Patrick, and saw *Fíthal* as filling the gap between the traditional authors of early Irish law and the PHP. The survival of Oisín and Caoilte after the death of other Fenian warriors would be a possible parallel.

One of the interesting features of the poem is its claim that there were only eleven authors of early Irish law. D. A. Binchy, on the one hand, explains this in terms of the conservative nature of early Irish legal tradition.²⁹ On the other hand, Neil McLeod argues that the commentaries on the law tracts were attempting to interpret the traditional law, and in effect updated it to conform to the practice of the commentators.³⁰ Regarding the persistent question as to why no more traditional early Irish law was written after the eighth century, this poem suggests that, whatever may have been the case between the eighth and the eleventh centuries, the later authors considered the earlier law immutable, albeit if subject to reinterpretation.

²⁷Peter Smith, 'Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend: A Middle-Irish Poem on the Authors and Laws of Ireland', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994), pp. 120–121.

²⁸Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), pp. 25–26.

²⁹D. A. Binchy, 'Distraint in Irish Law', *Celtica* 10 (1973), pp. 60–69.

³⁰Neil McLeod, 'Assault and Attempted Murder in Brehon Law', *Irish Jurist* 33 (1998), pp. 358–369.

4.2 Fíthal and Fenian Poetry

Finn mac Cumail and the stories and poetry surrounding him and his band, called the *fian*, constitute such a large section of the extant literature that modern scholars have coined the term ‘Finn Cycle’ as a vivision of early Irish literature.³¹ As Alan Bruford stated:

It seems as though every member of the poetic caste from the twelfth century to the eighteenth must have tried his hand at composing either a ballad (or two!) or a prose tale about the Fenians, and where he had heard nothing he could use to fill in a gap – a name, a line of descent, the cause of a dispute – each one felt free to invent, or at any rate to adapt something for himself.³²

On that view, it is only natural that some of the authors of Fenian tales and ballads would use Fíthal to serve their literary ends. As is seen in Chapter 5, once Fíthal and Cormac mac Airt were connected, it was only a matter of time before Fíthal appeared within a Fenian context. Fíthal was introduced, with varying degrees of success, by the authors of the three Fenian poems below. These, together with the prose tale *Bruiden na hAlmaine*, form the evidence for Fíthal’s presence in the Fenian genre.

The three Fenian lays discussed below are all found in *Duanaire Finn*, poems collected by Aodh Ó Dochartaigh for his patron Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill circa 1626–1631. Then the latter was fighting in the religious wars on the Continent. The scribe collected these from earlier MS sources and then sent the completed book to his patron. While the scribe was collecting his material in the seventeenth century, the poems within the collection are far older.³³ The history of the manuscript continued thus:

At some point prior to 1658 the manuscript left Captain Somhairle’s possession and made its way to the library of the Irish Franciscans in St Anthony’s College, Louvain. Following the confiscation of the College in 1793, the library was moved to St Isidore’s College in Rome before being transferred to Ireland in 1872. Following periods in the Franciscan Libraries at Merchant’s Quay, Dublin, until 1946, and thereafter in Killiney, County Dublin, until 2000, it was finally deposited in the Library of University College, Dublin, together with other Irish manuscripts in the Franciscans’ possession.³⁴

³¹Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, ed., *The Lore of Ireland: An Encyclopaedia of Myth, Legend, and Romance* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 227–233.

³²Alan Bruford, ‘Oral and Literary Fenian Tales’, *Béaloideas* 54/55 (1986/7), pp. 25–26.

³³John Carey, ‘Remarks on Dating’, in John Carey, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003).

³⁴Ruairí Ó hUiginn, ‘Duanaire Finn: Patron and Text’, in John Carey, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003), p. 79.

The three poems which mention *Fíthal* have a linguistic core that reaches back as far as the twelfth century. The focus of the discussion below is on the adaptation that *Fíthal*'s character undergoes, both within the Fenian *milieu* and in the literature in general. As with certain of the foregoing texts, the Fenian lays are discussed separately at first and then considered together.

4.2.1 *Duanaire Finn VI*

In this poem,³⁵ the *fían* leave Finn behind as they make their way to Loch Luig. Finn has to stay at home on account of a *geis*.³⁶ After hunting,³⁷ they retire to Dumha Mhuc, where Cormac Mac Airt has a retainer, Lunna, from Lochlann. The *fían* ask for hospitality, but this is denied to them because Lunna does not know them. Diarmaid Ó Duinn then decides impetuously to jump the rampart into the fort and allow the *fían* inside. A fight then ensues, from which the *fían* emerge victorious. Cormac is enraged by this insult to his retainer. He calls Flaithrí and his father, *Fíthal*, to judge the case. They judge Lunna and his men guilty of refusing hospitality to the *fían*. The poet ends by praising the warriors of the *fían*.

4.2.1.1 Previous Scholarship

Gerard Murphy provides an extensive introduction to the text of the *Duanaire Finn* and textual notes for each individual poem.³⁸ A collection of essays on the subject of the *Duanaire Finn* was published by the Irish Texts Society in 2003.³⁹ None of the essays directly refer to this poem, but they provide interesting analyses of *Duanaire Finn* as a whole, which are discussed in the appropriate places below.

4.2.1.2 The Text

Murphy dates this poem to the second half of the twelfth century on the basis of its diction and the presence of meaningless infixed pronouns.⁴⁰ He identifies ten words which could indicate an original composition in the Middle Irish period. However, the poem is composed in the strict classical form of the *deibhidhe* metre. This strict adherence to the classical metrical rules and the use of the independent pronoun certainly seem to demonstrate a relatively late

³⁵*Duanaire Finn*, part I, ed. and trans. by Gerard Murphy (London: Irish Texts Society), pp. 17–19 and trans. pp. 114–116.

³⁶*Duanaire Finn*, part I, p. 114.

³⁷See Kanerva Heikkinen, 'The Hunt of the Magical Boar: in Search of Cultural Meanings in Medieval Celtic Literature', in Riitta Latvio, Petri Pietiläinen and Krisi Yläanne, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000).

³⁸*Duanaire Finn*, part III, ed. and trans. by Gerard Murphy (London: Irish Texts Society, 1953).

³⁹*Duanaire Finn: Reassessments*, ed. by John Carey (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003).

⁴⁰*Duanaire Finn*, part III, ed. and trans. by Gerard Murphy (London: Irish Texts Society), pp. 16–17. For a partial re-evaluation of Murphy's linguistic analysis see John Carey, 'Remarks on Dating', in John Carey, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003).

composition. Given that the medieval Irish scholars were capable of introducing older terms and forms into their poetry to give the composition an aura of antiquity, it is possible that the terms and forms listed by Murphy as possible evidence for a Middle Irish date of composition are actually deliberate archaisms. On balance, the poem was most likely composed after the classical standards of composition, spelling and metrics were enunciated by the poets in the twelfth century.

4.2.1.3 *Fíthal in the Context of This Text*

Fíthal and his son, Flaithrí, appear in the story only briefly, but that is enough to rescue the *fíán* from the wrath of Cormac. Fíthal is presented as the final adjudicator on the matter even for Cormac, the high-king. There are no other legal procedures in the tale, and Fíthal's adjudication is taken as the final word on the matter by all of the characters in the story. However, Fíthal and his son are one-dimensional characters brought on stage by the author to avoid the complications which would have ensued if Cormac had retaliated against the *fíána*. This becomes a common refrain in the Fenian literature regarding Fíthal, both in the lays and in the prose literature. His resolution of difficulties becomes a plot device to secure the desired outcome for the author, and to bring the story to a satisfactory conclusion.

4.2.1.4 *Discussion*

Although, as we have explained, the figure of Fíthal is deployed for a practical literary purpose, this does not mean that there is not a legal dimension to the story. In early Irish law, great emphasis is placed on the practice of hospitality, but it does have limits.⁴¹ A king is obliged to give hospitality only to a freeman but not to his followers.⁴² The *fíán* were without Finn when they attempted to gain entry to the fort. The status of the *fíán* may have been such as to require Finn's mediation – perhaps through his standing as *rígfénnid*, if his liminal status, as proposed by Nagy, is accepted.⁴³

Without Finn to mediate, the *fíán* may have been considered outsiders. As the poem states: 'they thought no more of our music than of the wolves of the wood'.⁴⁴ The other complication is that the poem states that it was cold at night. Keating stated that Finn and the *fíána* were quartered for the winter from *Samain* to *Beltine* in the houses of the people of the king to whom they were attached.⁴⁵ Although the season is not mentioned in the poem itself, this could be a reflection of the reality of troop quartering in Ireland at the time of Keating, rather than a

⁴¹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 139–140.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁴³Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 79.

⁴⁴*Duanaire Finn*, part I, ed. and trans. by Gerard Murphy (London: Irish Texts Society), pg. 114.

⁴⁵Keating, 'History of Ireland', ed. and trans. P. S Dinneen, pp. 327–328.

reflection of an archaic institution.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the focus of the author was clearly not on the legalities of hospitality. *Fíthal* and *Flaithrí* are brought on stage to save the *fíana* from legal repercussions for their actions in the first part of the story. After the author has done this, he extols the martial virtues of the members of the *fíana* and places a prophecy in the mouth of *Caoilte*.

4.2.2 Duanaire Finn XLIII

This poem⁴⁷ presents family details concerning members of Finn's *fían* and Finn himself. It opens with his birth and ends with his death. It begins with *Caoilte* stating that he is standing on the spot of Finn's birth. Although not explicitly named in the poem, it is in Leinster, *Temair Mairce*.⁴⁸ It then names his mother, *Muirne*, his father, *Cumall*, and his grand-father, *Trénmór*. After a lengthy list of facts relating to other members of the *fían*, the poet returns to Finn and *Fíthal* to give anecdotes about their lives.

4.2.2.1 Previous Scholarship

Joseph Nagy refers to this poem in relation to *Fíthal*'s familial relationship with Finn.⁴⁹ He does not mention the fact that, in the poem itself, the poet finds it necessary to exclaim that the connection is truthful⁵⁰ in a manner which suggests that he feared his audience might not believe him. Neither does Nagy allude to the poet's explanation for his doubt, namely that 'these men are a problem for historians'.⁵¹ Instead, he accepts the poem's veracity as to *Fíthal*'s parentage, despite the poet's own uncertainty as to the portrayal of *Fíthal* as the half-brother of Finn and son of a druidess. In light of his acceptance of *Fíthal* as Finn's half-brother, Nagy uses the references in this poem to supply the names of the two half-brothers missing from other stories about Finn.⁵² The implications of the poet's hedging and its connections with *Acallam na Senórach* are discussed below.

⁴⁶K. W. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003), p. 104. See also Gerd Petterson, *Finn and the Fían: Reflections of Ancient Celtic Myth and Institutions in Early and Medieval Ireland* (Göteborg: Göteborg Institutionen för Religionsvetenskap, Göteborgs Universitet, 1999), p. 24.

⁴⁷*Duanaire Finn*, part II, ed. and trans. by Gerard Murphy (London: Irish Texts Society, 1933), pp. 100–13.

⁴⁸Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 100.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

⁵⁰*Duanaire Finn*, part II, p. 105.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵²*Ibid.*

4.2.2.2 The Text

Gerard Murphy gives a Middle Irish date to the earlier, shorter version of this poem in a text called the *Accallam Bec* in the Book of Lismore.⁵³ Murphy demonstrates that the *Duanaire Finn* version of the poem has been expanded from the version contained in the *Accallam Bec*. For *Fíthal*, at least, the interpolated parts of the poem can now be ascribed to *Acallam na Senórach*, since the poet here used portions of *Acallam na Senórach* (see Section 3.10) to supplement sections of the poem in the *Accallam Bec*. As for the date of the interpolated portions, it is safe to conclude that they were added by a later redactor of the text during the first half of the Early Modern period. They could have been inserted during the twelfth century revival of native Irish learning; but in any event we are dealing with a late Middle Irish poem added to by one or more intermediate scholars before being finally copied into *Duanaire Finn*.

4.2.2.3 *Fíthal* in the Context of This Text

There are three textual references to *Fíthal* within this text. They give three pieces of information: (1) *Fíthal* is the brother of Finn;⁵⁴ (2) he is the half-brother of Finn and the son of Bodmann, the druidess;⁵⁵ and (3) *Fíthal* is present at a battle in Broic in which Finn and all of his brothers fight to the death.⁵⁶ *Fíthal*'s performance in this battle was so extraordinary that, unlike his half-brothers, he is given the honour of a full stanza, which describes him as slaying two hundred men and then dying by the hand of 'Fearghus Fínbhéil'.⁵⁷

Even more interesting than the pieces of information given are the poet's interjections preceding his mention of *Fíthal*. Twice, in stanzas 20 and 23, the poet issues a warning: 'it is a problem for historians to name Cumhal's three sons: . . .'; and 'these men are a problem for historians. . .'. Once, in stanza 20, he interjects, as an aside, 'I speak truth'. It is tempting to suggest that he is anticipating some negative reaction to the addition of *Fíthal* as a new character in the family of Finn.

If these interjections indicate the poet's reservations with regard to the use of the personage of *Fíthal* and his genealogy from *Acallam na Senórach*, this could mean that the later author expected his audience to have objections, or possibly that he suspected confusion on the part of the poet himself in relation to the genealogy of *Fíthal*. This expectation could be based on the conservative mindset of the later audience, or it could be because he was conscious that

⁵³*Duanaire Finn*, part III, ed. and trans. by Gerard Murphy (London: Irish Texts Society, 1933), pp. 100–102.

⁵⁴*Duanaire Finn*, part II, p. 105.

⁵⁵*Duanaire Finn*, part II, p. 107.

⁵⁶*Duanaire Finn*, part II, p. 111. For a discussion of Druids and outlaws, see Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 203–232.

⁵⁷*Duanaire Finn*, part II, p. 111, stanza 41. For another instance of this character in relation to *Fíthal*, see Section 3.4.

a change had occurred in the expected relationship between Fíthal and Cormac.⁵⁸ The only difficulty with this explanation is the fact that the father-son relationship is attested in *Acallam na Senórach*, which is one of the more authoritative of the extant sources of Fenian literature and Irish mythological history. It is a pity that the poet does not indicate precisely why he felt that the genealogy of Fíthal was problematic; but that is in the nature of these sources.

4.2.2.4 Discussion

This poem outlines the family relationships of Finn and his *fíán*, as well as the physical characteristics of some members of the *fíán*. Although the setting is Finn's birthplace, this is not named in the poem itself. The poet mentions Finn's death, more for stylistic purposes (i. e. closing the poem with the same subject as it began) than for any substantive reason. The poem links Fíthal with Finn via the liminal and mysterious figure of Bodmann, the druidess.⁵⁹ Added to this, as we have argued, the poet himself seems quite unsure about associating Fíthal with Finn.

If we accept Nagy's assessment of Finn as the liminal figure *par excellence* in high medieval Irish literature, then Fíthal's connection to both Finn and Bodmann places Fíthal within a doubly liminal space.⁶⁰ It is hard to say whether the author saw the position of Fíthal in this light when writing the poem because the *Duanaire Finn* text is a composite rather than an integrated whole.⁶¹ But although there is no explicit evidence that the poet would have understood the doubly liminal position of Fíthal two allusions lend weight to the argument that he did. In stanza 40, the poet states: 'Even Fíthiol (sic), who of the three very valorous brothers was weakest of hand...'.⁶² This seems to indicate that Fíthal was not in the habit of fighting as the *fíán* were. Second, each time the poet mentions Fíthal, he qualifies his statement with an aside about the truth of the connection. The crux, on this reading, is also that Fíthal is the quintessential insider. He is a poet and judge to Cormac mac Airt, who stands at the centre of conventional society, and counts hence as a pillar of the society which marginalises Finn.⁶³ In Ireland, where familial kin and fosterage relationships formed the basis of political society, this relationship would not be lost upon the author or his audience.⁶⁴ This complicates Fíthal's position from the point of

⁵⁸For the possible audience for Fenian lays, see Alan Bruford, 'Oral and Literary Fenian Tales', *Béaloideas* 54/55 (1986/7), p. 27.

⁵⁹Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 203–232.

⁶⁰Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 79. For an opposing view of Finn, see Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, 'The River Boyne and the Ancient Seer', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 6 (1994).

⁶¹Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Duanaire Finn: Patron and Text', in John Carey, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003).

⁶²*Duanaire Finn*, part II, p. 111.

⁶³Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 53–57.

⁶⁴Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre

view of early Irish literature. In this analysis, Fíthal is cast both as an upholder of the established order, and as a man on the fringe, with an indeterminate or possibly antagonistic stance toward that which he is supposed to uphold.

If we do not accept the applicability of Nagy's assessment, this frees us from the contradiction that would ensue from invoking a liminal analysis at this point. After all, one may argue, Finn and his band of men are only a fringe element in society, but they are still a part of that society.⁶⁵ *Fian*-members are not entirely outsiders and, as such, they do not require a figure such as Finn to mediate their relationship to society. Seeing the *fiana* in this light liberates us and allows Fíthal to remain in his position without endangering the society within which he operates.

The standing that the poet has assigned to Fíthal would perhaps be more clear-cut if the poet himself were more sure of Fíthal's connections. The two mentions of Fíthal made by the poet make Fíthal's relationship to Finn explicit, but his two authorial interjections distance the poet from the association claimed. This would be a strange stance for the poet to take, unless he anticipated that his audience would have differing associations with Fíthal from what he was about to propose. However, this poetical hedging might be expected to save the poet from trouble, should the intended audience take unkindly to this new association for Fíthal. This is in stark contrast to the author of the poem in *Acallam na Senórach*, who is completely confident in his assessment of Fíthal and Finn.

Other than the associations half claimed for Fíthal, which pass from *Acallam na Senórach* to the present poem, the latter is an unremarkable work of mythological biography, which gives the names of the father and mother of each *fian* member, together with a short physical description or a note about their personality or socio-political alignment. The poet uses opening and closing motifs of Finn's birth and death, the last-mentioned being one of the variant death tales of Finn.

4.2.3 Duanaire Finn XLVII

This poem⁶⁶ resonates with many tales in early Irish literature. These resonances provide a rich palette for the poet. Fíthal appears as a more active character than in the last poem, which merely alluded to his prowess in battle and his genealogical relationships to Finn. In this poem, he speaks, passes judgements, and is discussed by the characters as being the pre-eminent judge.

The poem begins with a stanza describing the sword of Caoilte and ends with the narrator's recollection of the sword and its owner. The poet proceeds to give the history of the sword from its first owner, Diarmaid, son of Cearbhall, to Finn, around whom the middle part of the poem revolves. Once Finn is in possession of the sword, the poem shifts from historical to

Dame, 1994), pp. 328–367.

⁶⁵Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 53–57.

⁶⁶*Duanaire Finn*, part II, pp. 124–141.

present tense narrative. An assembly is held and Finn asks why the assembly has been convened. The gathered throng responds in one voice that he that is one of the five most generous men in Ireland. They have gathered to take the sword from Finn by asking for it. This technique is used against heroes in an attempt to shame them into performing a particular action.⁶⁷ If Finn does not show his generosity immediately, he will be shamed in the eyes of society. He offers the sword to them, but Oisín asks how he will give the sword away. At this point, Finn determines to ask ‘Conn’s son’s grand-daughter’, i. e. Cormac’s daughter Ailbhe, who is the best female judge in Ireland, to advise them on the best way to give away the sword.⁶⁸ She instructs them to have a race. The rules are not given explicitly but the impression given is that the entire assembly will run from one point to another and whoever seizes the sword first gains possession. The race begins and two participants, Caoilte and Finn, are the clear leaders. At the chosen destination, both grasp the sword simultaneously. Finn gains only the sheath of the sword while Caoilte obtains the sword itself. Finn appeals to Caoilte, who gives judgement over to Ailbhe declaring that, if Finn disputes her judgement, it will be appealed to Fíthal. Ailbhe gives the sword to Caoilte, with the statement that she will judge before they grow violent, giving a gnomic statement by Fíthal in support of her judgement: ‘Fíthiol of the judgements would say “to every knight is due his good horse”’.⁶⁹

The resolution of the case is not described but the poem states (stanza 37a) that their case had ‘come to an end’. Presumably, Caoilte keeps the sword and sheath. At this point, Fíthal, his son Flaithrí, and Cormac approach the group. Ailbhe tells Finn and Caoilte to keep her judgement secret and to give the case to Fíthal to decide (stanza 38), whereupon ‘the allrighteous four’ (i. e. Cormac, Fíthal, Flaithrí, and – presumably – Cairbre) uphold Ailbe’s decision and the sword is retained by Caoilte.⁷⁰ Cormac then asks Finn and Ailbe to make peace between Fíthal and himself. Fíthal’s goats have entered Cormac’s garden where they ate his plants and destroyed his flowers. Ailbhe says she will make the judgement alone, and adjudges that Cormac should compel his gardener to pay for the damages, since he should have guarded the garden from the herd of goats.

Cormac and Finn agree, saying that this is the judgement they themselves would have given. After the case is settled, Cormac holds a feast for the entire assembly. At this feast, he rewards Finn with sixty ounces of gold and fifty hounds. Alluding to this act of generosity on the part of Cormac, the narrator bemoans the end of the heroic era and gives a prophecy about the decline

⁶⁷Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 348–349.

⁶⁸For Ailbhe’s other connections to Finn, see Johan Corthals, ‘Ailbe’s speech to Cithruad’, *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 34 (2004), pp. 1–9.

⁶⁹*Duanaire Finn*, part II, p. 133.

⁷⁰*Duanaire Finn*, part II, pp. 136–7 (stanza 43). I follow MacNeill and Murphy in assuming that dislocation has taken place in the MS, and that stanza 43 belongs between stanza 40 and 41. For the omission of Cairbre, which may indicate further dislocation of the original poem, see *Duanaire Finn*, part III, p. 108.

of true piety towards violence and duplicity by the priesthood and the kings of more recent times.

There are five interesting features embedded in this poem: the inclusion of a female judge, the use of generosity as a means of collective coercion on the part of the assembly; the dispute over the sword and its resolution; the similarity between the judgement on Fíthal's goat herd and Cormac's earlier decision as to the culpability of the shepherd, which marked Cormac as the true King of Ireland; finally, the declining piety and truthfulness of kings and priests, which possibly reflects the time in which the poet composed. These features and their significance are discussed below.

4.2.3.1 Previous Scholarship

Murphy connects this story to *Bruidhean Bheag na hAlmhan* and *Acallam na Senórach*, both of which support a similar cast of characters and circumstances.⁷¹ But though he connects these three texts, he does not propose any direct authorial relationships between them. There seems to be no other scholarship which touches this particular poem directly. Other textual and thematic connections is explored below.

4.2.3.2 The Text

While Murphy dates this poem tentatively to the middle of the twelfth century, he acknowledges that certain Middle Irish words, meanings, and forms are used.⁷² This could place the genesis of the poem as early as the tenth or eleventh centuries. The origin of the poem lies within the same general time period as *Acallam na Senórach*, which is consonant with the similarities in the cast of characters who appear in both texts. However, we cannot prove that the poet knew the contents of *Acallam na Senórach* directly, or even if there was a fashion of using the characters in *Acallam na Senórach* for other compositions around the same time. A fuller survey of the poem and the potentially comparable texts is needed before a confident pronouncement about its origins can be made.

4.2.3.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

This poem is relatively complex and multifaceted. At first, Fíthal appears in the role for which he was created: the pre-eminent judge of early Ireland. Since he first appears after Ailbhe has made her judgement, he serves as a kind of court of appeal. He rules in favour both of Caoilte's claim to the sword and Ailbhe's original judgement. It is interesting to note here that while Ailbhe appeals only to Fíthal, 'the allrighteous four' are to respond. In other contexts, it was

⁷¹*Duanaire Finn*, part III, p. 108.

⁷²*Duanaire Finn*, part III, pp. 107–109.

often the king who officially made the judgement while the judges – in their official, rather than their private capacity – advised the king on the legal aspects of the case.⁷³

Later, *Fíthal*'s role is inverted and he becomes a defendant, in a way, which is reminiscent of Cormac's own rise to the kingship.⁷⁴ Ailbhe states that she wants to judge the case herself. The case is concluded when Finn and Cormac agree that Ailbhe's judgement is the correct one.

4.2.3.4 Discussion

The inclusion of a woman judge is interesting, as the status of women in early Ireland is still debatable in many respects.⁷⁵ Often the literature seems to portray the women as holding the same positions as men, albeit at a slightly lower level.⁷⁶ The problem is that information on the position of women is unavailable beyond what is supplied by or influenced by misogynistic churchmen. Here, it may help to notice Ailbhe's relationship to Cormac. As the poem states, she is the daughter of Conn's grandson, Cormac mac Airt. She is also described as 'queen of Tara', 'chaste', 'wisest of women', and 'the best woman judge'. All these positive attributions make it clear that we are dealing with an exceptional character in Ailbhe. A striking characteristic of Ailbhe is her boldness. She unhesitatingly lays down the rules of the race, and when its unclear outcome is referred to her by Finn and Caoilte, she does not hesitate to give a judgement. Finn proposes the possibility of an appeal to a higher judge (in this case, *Fíthal*).

Generosity as a virtue in early Ireland is a well-known attribute. Kings are often urged by wisdom figures to promote generosity, and it is always a feature of what is considered a good reign.⁷⁷ In this particular poem, it serves as a narrative device to propel the story forward. After the sword is given to Finn,⁷⁸ an assembly is formed where Finn is put to the test. He must prove his generosity by the act of giving away a valuable object: the sword.⁷⁹

An appropriate comparison can be made here with *Cú Chulainn*'s encounter with Redg Cáinte (the Satirist) in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.⁸⁰ The Connachtmén, with their queen, decide that *Cú*

⁷³See Marilyn Gerriets, 'The King as Judge in Early Ireland', *Celtica* 20 (1988).

⁷⁴Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), pp. 64–65.

⁷⁵See 'The Fragility of Her Sex?': *Medieval Irish Women in Their European Context*, ed. by C. E. Meek and M. K. Simms (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996).

⁷⁶For instance, in the case of poetry, see Thomas Owen Clancy, 'Women Poets in Early Medieval Ireland: Stating the Case', in Christine Meek and Katharine Simms, eds., 'The Fragility of Her Sex?': *Medieval Irishwomen in Their European Context* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996).

⁷⁷Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 158–159.

⁷⁸When this actually happens in relation to other events in Finn's life is not explored by the poet.

⁷⁹For a discussion of cross-cultural aspects of generosity and the hero, see R. Mark Scowcroft, 'The Irish Analogues to Beowulf', *Speculum* 74 (1999) and Martin Puhvel, *Beowulf and Celtic Tradition* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1979). See also Patrick Wormald, *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and Its Historian*, ed. Stephen Baxter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 30–105.

⁸⁰Cecile O'Rahilly, ed., *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976 [reprint 2003]), pp. Lns. 1510–1544. See Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 348–9; Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present*

Chulainn would be powerless without his spear, which he had used to kill Buide mac Báin. They send the satirist to ask it of him. When he refuses to hand over the spear, the satirist threatens to use his powers of satire on Cú Chulainn for his lack of generosity. Cú Chulainn then gives the spear to the satirist through his head. Refusing, even if he had a valid excuse, would have left him open to the satirist's criticism and, hence, loss of honour.⁸¹ The satirist would have had the power to leave him without honour, as not responding correctly to a satire was a sign of a weak or unjust person.⁸² This was Finn's predicament, with the assembly demanding to experience his generosity.

Once the episode of the race is finished, there follows a highly condensed version of a legal case. First, Finn initiates a case against Caoilte by making a public plea for justice and witnesses. The formal word for this was *aidbriud*, 'assertion', and the procedure may have been well known by the poem's audience because of its public nature.⁸³ In the normal course of events, the plaintiff would then have an advocate to plead on his behalf, and the defendant or his associate would then put the case for the defence. This step is omitted by the author of the poem, in-as-much as Finn and Caoilte submit the case directly to Ailbhe. In normal practice, the defendant gave a pledge on the third day after an offence.⁸⁴ Then, the plaintiff's lawyer chose one of the 'five paths of judgement', each path corresponding to a particular kind of case depending on the sureties involved.⁸⁵ In the poem this stage in normal legal proceedings is absent, and Ailbhe proceeds at once to give judgement against Finn. He attempts to purchase the sword from Caoilte but to no avail. Fíthal then arrives with his son and Cormac mac Airt. The case is appealed to them, Ailbhe's decision remaining hidden from them until they have made a judgement coinciding with that of Ailbhe. Cormac's involvement in this appeal could reflect what some scholars see as a standard procedure of early Irish courts, namely that a decision of a judge must be ratified by a king who agreed to carry authority above and beyond the sureties already involved.⁸⁶

The legal case between Finn and Caoilte is incidental to the main thrust of the poem and is so treated. However, the broad outlines of what the poem's audience would expect to see in a legal case are here, especially the public act of beginning a legal proceeding. It can be argued that, as there was a judge at hand and the incident was fresh in everyone's memory, the

in *Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 220–222; Proinsias Mac Cana, *Croesaniaid and Crosáin: Literary Outsiders*, in Geraint H. Jenkins, ed., *Wales and the Welsh 2000: Proceedings of the Millennium Conference of the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies*, University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (Aberystwyth: University of Wales, 2001).

⁸¹Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 45–46.

⁸²Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 138–139.

⁸³*Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 191–192. See also Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: From Court to Custom in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 115–125.

⁸⁶This point is contentious. See Marilyn Gerriets, 'The King as Judge in Early Ireland', *Celtica* 20 (1988), and Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 197–198.

legal niceties were being dispensed with in the interest of speed. It could happen that a judge was called upon to arbitrate without recourse to full legal procedure.⁸⁷ If this were case, the procedure called *coir n-athcomairc*, ‘suitability of enquiry’, may have been assumed, since it was the ‘catch-all’ path prescribed when speed was of the essence.⁸⁸

Once the case between Finn and Caoilte was settled, the poet immediately turns to the case involving Fíthal’s goats and Cormac’s garden. This story is a doublet of, and an episode in the myth of Cormac’s rise to sovereignty.⁸⁹ In the story about Cormac, he is a young man approaching Tara for the first time after his exile by MacCon, the current King of Ireland. He sees a woman weeping while the steward of the King of Ireland is speaking. When he asks what the problem is, he is told by the king’s steward that the woman’s sheep have broken into the queen’s woad-garden and the king has passed judgement that her sheep are forfeit. Cormac comes forward and points out that as the sheep had sheared the plants, so the sheep, instead of being forfeited, should be sheared in recompense. The king, recognising this to be the correct judgement, gives his throne to Cormac.

In our poem’s retelling, a number of roles have been changed. In the original myth, the defendant is a woman and the judge a man. In the poem, a man is the defendant and a woman undertakes the role of the judge. Instead of being a recipient, she is given the role of power. The participants in this case may also contain a doublet. In the poem, the young Cormac challenges the King of Ireland and bests him, while in the story the mature Cormac challenges the King of Judges – but in this case the judgement exonerates the defendant. This episode, with its hint of tension between Cormac and Fíthal, also resonates with their contentious poetical dialogue (see Chapter 5).

But while these resonances are interesting, the parallels are not fully worked out. The main thread of the poem is resumed when Fíthal and Cormac have upheld Ailbhe’s judgement, and it moves swiftly to its conclusion – a feast for all the participants. An apparently artificial addition at the end of the poem sees the narrator bemoan the lack of piety and generosity in his own time. To conclude, echoes of Cormac’s rise to power may be a case of a poet showing off knowledge of early Irish literature; but artistically, he has left us with a rather confusing section of the poem.

At the end, the narrator restates his commitment to ‘chaste Christ’ and closes the poem, as he opened it, with Caoilte’s sword. The conceit of a famous character in history or mythology commenting on aspects of society has a long history, not only in Irish literature but in world literature, and often betrays the preoccupations of the author. In this poem, the poet criticises

⁸⁷Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 53.

⁸⁸Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: From Court to Custom in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 124–125.

⁸⁹See Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 240 and Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), pp. 63–65.

both the Church, for ordaining priests who enforce strict piety on others while not practising it themselves,⁹⁰ and kings who tax the people excessively.⁹¹ Both of these were ingrained features of the late medieval Gaelic world. Given the popularity of the Fenian tales, the poet may have used his work to voice the common person's complaints about society at that time. Murphy considers the ending of the poem to be a fragment of a prophecy poem. The idea that it does not fit in with the rest of the poem is strengthened by the fact that the final quatrain is in a different metre from the rest of the poem.⁹² Conceivably, this change in metre points to a later redactor replacing the original ending with a previously unconnected fragment of poetry which chimes with his own preoccupations.

The poem itself moves in three distinct pasts: first, the 'golden age' of Finn; second, the 'golden age' of St Patrick; and third, the recent, not so 'golden', past of the author himself. These three settings do not all sit easily with each other. There is little friction between those of Finn and St Patrick, for reasons which we have explained. Indeed, *Acallam na Senórach* is a well-worn path in early Irish literature.⁹³ As Murphy indicates, however, the final section is not so well integrated. It seems that either the original poet or a later interpolator allowed additional material, including contacts with his own time, to intrude into the poem to the detriment of its artistic unity.

4.3 Miscellaneous

While the previous sections in this chapter have considered poems which are similar in genre and scope, this section deals with certain poems which do not fall within identifiable groups. The three sources examined below the bardic encomium *Ag so chugad, a Chormaic*, the poem on Carmun from the *Metrical Dindsenchas*, and MacPherson's *Temora* do not have natural affiliations with any of the particular categories identified for the purposes of this chapter. They are treated here in no particular order.

4.3.1 Ag so chugad, a Chormaic

This poem was composed by Irial Mac Aonghusa Uí Uiginn. It is typical of bardic poems from the Classical Gaelic period (twelfth to seventeenth centuries), which refer to the *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail* (see Chapter 5).⁹⁴ In it the poet refers to the fact that poets are generally

⁹⁰Cf. K. W. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003), p. 106-116.

⁹¹Cf. Ibid., p. 34-40.

⁹²*Duanaire Finn*, part III, p. 108.

⁹³Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 317-323.

⁹⁴Liam Ó Caithnia, *Apalóga na bhfilí, 1200-1650* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1984), pp. 100-101.

an irascible species and prone to fits of pique against their patrons. He insinuates that this is one of the prices that great kings pay for the praise they receive from their poets.

4.3.1.1 Previous Scholarship

There are only two references to this poem in the secondary literature. The first appears in Ó Caithnia's study of bardic apologues from the Early Modern period as noted above. The second is an analysis of the purpose of the poem by Pádraig A. Breatnach, where he also considers Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn's plea to have Cormac Ó hEadhra act as guarantor on behalf of Tadhg and his male relatives.⁹⁵

4.3.1.2 The Text

The manuscript within which this poem appears, *Leabhar Í Eadhra*, 'the Book of O'Hara', was written by Tuathal Ó hUiginn, in 1597. The poem itself is dated by the editor of the book, Lambert McKenna, to between 1581 and 1597. It was composed for Cormac Ó hEadhra, chief of the Í Eadhra of Co. Sligo, who died in 1612.⁹⁶ The MS itself is in private ownership. A copy of the MS, which had been prepared by O'Longain for the RIA in 1826 was used by the editor to fill out unreadable parts of the original manuscript.⁹⁷

4.3.1.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

In this poem, Fíthal's more demanding side is depicted by the poet to demonstrate that even great kings must periodically endure emotional outbursts from their poets. Fíthal is given in a list of mythological disputes involving kings and their poets. The poet admonishes his patron that every king needs his *ollamh*, 'chief poet', to praise and maintain the king in the eyes of society. The poet makes it clear that he believes that the poets who had disputes with their patrons were justified in their anger.

This poem makes an implicit allusion to the *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail* and helps us to envision the context within which the *Immacallam* was interpreted by later poets. The poet stays quite close to the poem itself, as opposed to the prose and verse prologue attached to the Rawl. B512 version of the *Immacallam*. But Ó hUiginn gives a version of the episode in which Fíthal leaves Cormac, which drives Cormac mad, until he finally entices Fíthal back to his side. This could indicate that the *Immacallam* is part of a wider tradition concerning Cormac and Fíthal, on which the later poet drew to create his composition. This would imply that the

⁹⁵Pádraig A. Breatnach, 'An Appeal for a Guarantor', *Celtica* 21 (1990).

⁹⁶Lambert McKenna, ed., *The Book of O'Hara: Leabhar Í Eadhra* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951), pp. ix–x.

⁹⁷RIA MS 3 B 14.

literature about Fíthal available currently is only part of what was available to the poets of the Classical period.

4.3.1.4 Discussion

The poet presents Fíthal as a poet rather than a judge. The distinction of poet and judge in the early period may well have been blurred (see Chapter 3), so that judges and poets were not completely separated or, at least, were not distinct in the eyes of later authors who wrote or told stories about them. In early Irish law, for a judge to qualify for the highest form of judge, he must be a judge of ‘the three languages’ (i. e. law, poetry, and canon law). For a judge to be able to adjudge poetry, he had to be able to distinguish metres of Irish poetry.⁹⁸ This implies training in professional poetry for judges.

The early Irish system of education must also be a factor here. Before the reforms of the twelfth century, literary activity was largely confined to the monasteries.⁹⁹ An education within this system for the laity probably included both law and poetry.¹⁰⁰

The overarching purpose of the poem was to cite legendary instances of conflict between poet and patron. The poet seems to have wanted to warn his patron about the emotional volatility of poets in general. The poet eschews the reasons for the conflict in each case to focus directly upon the conflict itself. In this context Fíthal is presented as a poet rather than a judge. Although, as we have seen, poets and judges overlapped, it may be that Ó hUiginn was stretching things a little to suit his thesis and to extend his list.

The allusion to Fíthal’s departure from Cormac echoes in the *Immacallam* itself, in which Fíthal claims to have come from far away and threatens to return there if Cormac does not treat him better. The poet either expands upon this point in the poem or draws upon a source for the contention between Cormac and Fíthal which is no longer extant. On the one hand, elaborating an aspect of a legendary character’s life was a common literary activity at all periods, and Ó hUiginn had a possible reason to do so. On the other hand, the loss of medieval literary material was so widespread that a Classical poet could easily have had access to lore about learned men that has not survived.

4.3.2 Metrical Dindsenchas

Place names and the stories which surround them are an integral part of the Irish tradition and one does not need to search far to encounter this form of writing. The largest compendium of

⁹⁸Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 52.

⁹⁹Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 169–195.

¹⁰⁰Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, ‘The Laws of the Irish’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984); Fergus Kelly, ‘An Old-Irish Text on Court Procedure’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986), p. 84.

this lore is the *dindsenchas*, ‘place-lore’, of which both prose and metrical versions are found. In the *Metrical Dindsenchas*, we find reference to Fíthal in conjunction with the annual *óenach*, ‘fair/festival’, held on the day of Lughnasa at Carmun, the royal site of the kings of Leinster.¹⁰¹

As recounted in the *Metrical Dindsenchas*, the legend of this particular place concerns a sorceress, Carmun, who, with her three sons, attacks Ireland during the days of the Tuatha Dé Danann and destroys all the fruit of the land. Strangely, the battles themselves are not detailed, but we are told that the sons were defeated by Lug Láebach, Bé Chuilli, and Aí, and that they were sent away while their mother was imprisoned. She died of longing and was buried by Bres in the place named after her. This, according to the poet, was the first festival of Lughnasa,¹⁰² which would be repeated every third year henceforth.¹⁰³ As well as recounting the origin legend of the place name, the entertainments which were provided at the festival were included, so that the reader gains an appreciation of the festival itself and the splendour and solemnities of times past.

For the purposes of the following discussion it is useful to quote the relevant passage in full, as the differing forms of entertainment at the festival are described in relatively rich detail:

These are the Fair’s great privileges:
trumpets, fiddles, hollow-throated horns,
pipers, timpanists unwearied,
poets and meek musicians.

Tales of Find and the Fianna, a matter inexhaustible,
sacks, forays, wooings,
tablets, and books of lore,
satires, keen riddles:

Proverbs, maxims of might
and truthful teachings of Fíthal,
dark lays of the Dindsenchas for thee,
teachings of Cairpre and Cormac.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹Conor Newman, ‘Reflections on the Making of a ‘Royal Site’ in Early Ireland’, *World Archaeology* 30 (1998). See also N. B. Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge: Cruithne Press, 1994).

¹⁰²For the social significance of Lughnasa see Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 141–146, and Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997), pp. 458–462.

¹⁰³Carmun is currently thought to have been located in the parish of Carnalway, Co. Kildare. See Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, ‘Carman, Site of the Óenach Carmain: a Proposed Location’, *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002), pp. 64–70.

¹⁰⁴*The Metrical Dindsenchas Part III*, ed. and trans. Edward Gwynn, Royal Irish Academy: Todd Lecture Series vol. 10, (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co., 1913), p. 19–21. For a detailed survey involving other *óenaig* and their position in early Irish literature, see D. A. Binchy, ‘Fair of Tailtiu and the Feast of Tara’, *Ériu* 18 (1958), pp. 113–138.

4.3.2.1 Previous Scholarship

Edward Gwynn's *Metrical Dindshenchas* is the only existing critical edition of this text in its entirety and is the touchstone for all other scholarly work on the subject.¹⁰⁵ The introduction to the manuscripts that comprise the work is exhaustive and has yet to be superseded; however, there has been more recent work and a new edition is probably needed now (see below).

As it is one of the most important primary sources on early Ireland, the scholarship on the *Metrical Dindshenchas* is extensive. The *Metrical Dindshenchas* has been mined for information and supporting evidence in so many investigations that it is hard to summarise them in a single paragraph. For the purpose of this thesis, the explicitly onomastic strands among these studies are ignored, and, emphasis is placed on those which explore the literary and historical aspects of the text.

The most comprehensive article to date on the textual aspects of the *Metrical Dindshenchas* was written by Tomás Ó Concheanainn.¹⁰⁶ He breaks the poem on Carmun into two sections (lines 1–80 and lines 81–324). The section containing Fíthal is in the second section (lines 81–324). Ó Concheanainn concludes that the poem itself was written by two authors, which affects the date to be assigned to the text, as is explained in detail below.¹⁰⁷

4.3.2.2 The Text

There are three forms of the *Dindshenchas*: prose, metrical, and mixed. Of the prose versions, there are three subdivisions: one appears in the Book of Leinster (159–60 and 165–70), another in Rawl. B 506 (fols. 11–15), and the last in NLS MS 72.1.16 (fols. 1–5). The metrical version appears only in the Book of Leinster. The version which mixes prose and poetry appears in manuscripts from the fourteenth century. The most important of these are Rennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 'Manuscrit irlandais' (known as the Rennes *Dindshenchas*), but it also appears in the Book of Ballymote, the Great Book of Lecan, and the Book of Uí Maine, all of which are important manuscripts in their own right as repositories of important texts.

Edward Gwynn, editor of *Metrical Dindshenchas*, puts the earliest date for the Carmun poem after 1040, if the king mentioned in the poem was, in fact, Diarmait mac Mael na mBó; the latest date for the formation of the Carmun poem at 1079 is based on the date for an *óenach* held by Conchobar úa Conchobair Failge.¹⁰⁸ Tomás Ó Concheanainn agrees with this statement, but only for lines 81–324, within which the reference to Fíthal falls, on account of a correlation between the prose and metrical versions of the same part of the poem.¹⁰⁹ He suggests later

¹⁰⁵ *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, ed. and trans. Edward Gwynn, Royal Irish Academy: Todd Lecture Series vols. 8–12 (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co., 1903–1935).

¹⁰⁶ Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'The Three Forms of *Dindshenchas Éirenn*', *Journal of Celtic Studies* 3 (1981/2).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 98–99.

¹⁰⁸ *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, part III, p. 471.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

that the *Metrical Dindshenchas* (here referred to as Collection A) is an indirect witness to a twelfth-century recension of the prose *Dindshenchas*.¹¹⁰

Presumably, the teachings of Fíthal mentioned by the poet are the *Senbríathra Fíthail*, which Colin Ireland identified as the *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*.¹¹¹ Although the only ascription of these sayings to Fíthal is in the Book of Leinster, Ireland goes on to argue that the title *Senbríathra Fíthail* is of Middle Irish provenance, and was associated with the text prior to the compilation of the Book of Leinster.¹¹²

4.3.2.3 Fíthal in the Context of This Text

The poet places Fíthal in two contexts within the Carmun poem. The first context is that of the entertainments provided at the *óenach*. The poet specifically mentions Fíthal alongside such entertainments as *fianaigeacht* and other adventure stories. The second context is within the field of wisdom literature. The poet mentions Fíthal in references to *Tecosca Cormaic* and to *dindshenchas* itself. In the poet's estimation, it would seem, one could obtain both entertainment and instruction in wisdom at such a festival. The poet puts Fíthal to work as a way of strengthening his claim that wisdom was purveyed at festivals when he places Fíthal alongside Cormac and Cormac's wisdom text.

4.3.2.4 Discussion

Whether the description of the *óenach* was fabricated or not, it is interesting that Fíthal is mentioned among the wise. It seems that in the eyes of the author of this text, his legal expertise was not needed at the *óenach*, even though legal proceedings were presumably taking place there.¹¹³ We do not hear about lawyers referring to Fíthal, e. g. in legal debate, but about reciters of wisdom texts including his work, allegedly to a public audience as part of the entertainment. The legal dimension of Fíthal's character is de-emphasised and its place is taken by a more generalised wisdom figure.

As argued earlier (see Section 2.3.1), there is little evidence to suggest that wisdom literature composed in early Ireland was written with the non-literate in mind. This is especially true with regard to *Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu*, which was written by a clerical member of the literate élite of early Medieval Ireland. When this poem was written down in the ninth century, the literacy rate was no higher than it had been two hundred years earlier in Flann Fína's day. It is possible that wisdom literature was read aloud at festivals, but the perennial popularity

¹¹⁰Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'The Three Forms of *Dindshenchas Érenn*', *Journal of Celtic Studies* 3 (1981/2), p. 101.

¹¹¹Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 2–5.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 43–45.

¹¹³T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 14–15.

of heroic tales and the relative scarcity of wisdom literature preserved in the literary tradition suggests that the wisdom literature which has come down to us was, for the most part, a genre composed by and for the literate strata of society.

Given the above considerations, our poet is most likely to be listing all the events that an ideal *óenach* would have offered. In his vision, the *óenach* was perhaps a meeting of all the people, at which wisdom and the wise were to be represented. At the *óenach*, the parts of society became a whole, as indeed the word *óenach* ‘oneness’, proclaims. The entirety of Irish society needed to be represented in this ‘oneness’, including the function of wisdom. That explains why the poet places Fíthal with other wisdom figures, where they are easily identifiable as the wisdom element in this conception of early Irish society.

4.3.3 MacPherson’s Ossian

The latest literary or printed source for Fíthal appears in an unlikely place, embedded in the eighteenth-century work of James MacPherson, ‘Ossian’.¹¹⁴ MacPherson’s poems were, of course, the centre of a grand controversy following their first publication in 1760 and 1762. This controversy has clouded scholarly appreciation of the work of MacPherson, and cast a shadow over his other accomplishments in saving Gaelic manuscripts in Scotland.¹¹⁵ More recently, among those who study the traditional Gaelic ballad tradition, a more sympathetic and balanced understanding of MacPherson and his legacy has grown.¹¹⁶ For the purposes of the present work, the controversy surrounding MacPherson counts for little. The ultimate question for us is, of course, what image of Fíthal did MacPherson receive and project. But to answer this we need to ask about his possible sources for contact with the *fianaigecht* – especially since he had access to Gaelic MSS containing ossianica. Did he encounter Fíthal in a MS source and how, if so, is that reflected in his own work?

Before we can answer these questions, the circumstances of Fíthal within the Fingalian poems needs to be explored. Fíthal appears as an actor once in *Temora*, in Book IV with a footnote attached to his name,¹¹⁷ though his name appears a further four times in connection with ‘Moran’, who is introduced as his son.¹¹⁸ In his only substantive appearance, Fíthal is

¹¹⁴James MacPherson, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996). See also Dafydd R. Moore, ‘The Critical Response to Ossian’s Romantic Bequest’, in Gerard Carruthers and Alan Raws, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). I would like to thank Katie Louise Mathis for bringing these references to my attention.

¹¹⁵Howard Gaskill, ‘Introduction’, in Howard Gaskill, ed., *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991).

¹¹⁶Donald E. Meek, ‘The Gaelic Ballads of Scotland: Creativity and Adaption’, in Howard Gaskill, ed., *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991). See also, Joseph Falaky Nagy, ‘Observations on the Ossianesque in Medieval Irish Literature and Modern Irish Folklore’, *Journal of American Folklore* 114 (2001).

¹¹⁷James MacPherson, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 256, 498.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 28, 54–55, 68, 75.

a messenger who comes from Ireland to warn Cormac of impending war. The same role is assigned to Moran, who appears as a messenger as well as Fíthal's son. MacPherson's footnote attached to Fíthal's name explains to the reader that Fíthal is also a name for an 'inferior bard', which apparently confuses Fíthal's name with the word *fili*, 'poet', and ignores the traditional place of the *fili* at the highest reaches of the poetic hierarchy.¹¹⁹

Returning to the question posed above, a possible solution is suggested by a happy coincidence. Fíthal's name and his genealogy appear in the late Middle Irish tract *Cóir Anmann*.¹²⁰ The entry for him is, in fact, an insertion by the Reverend John Beaton from a marginal note in an Irish manuscript.¹²¹ Given the fact that MacPherson went on expeditions into the Highlands and Islands in search of sources, it is possible that he came into contact with this particular text. This would have given him information about Fíthal or, at least, the name would have been familiar. The fact that Fíthal is given such a small role in MacPherson's poem may indicate that MacPherson did not have more information about Fíthal than a name. The same could also apply to Moran who is portrayed as Fíthal's son in the epic. But although this is a likely place for MacPherson to have come across Fíthal, it need not be the only one. Having been raised in the Gaelic tradition, he may have encountered Fíthal in ballads and tales concerning Finn mac Cumail; for we have seen that there are some references to Fíthal in the Irish *fianaigecht*. There is no reason to dismiss the possibility that Fíthal's name was still remembered at that time in Gaelic Scotland, even if his original function had been obscured. And if MacPherson's personal connection with the Gaelic tradition was not as close as has sometimes been suggested, he may have received the name from a source in the Highlands during one of his journeys there.

The footnote that is attached to Fíthal's in an appearance in *Temora* is interesting in itself. MacPherson knows Fíthal as a poet, which is consonant with the later Irish tradition. Even if he misunderstood the way in which the term *fili* is normally applied and interpreted that Fíthal's name as a mere descriptive title, the basic association was maintained. However, the entry in *Cóir Anmann* does not naturally support such a change; so the references to the meaning 'poet' may be a false etymology based on the similarity of the sound of the words *Fíthal* and *fili*.

What Fíthal's appearance in MacPherson's *Ossian* means is not obvious. With the decline in Gaelic culture in both islands, the more esoteric and learned aspects of *fianaigecht* were in general the ones that disappeared first. In that sense, Fíthal's inclusion in *Ossian* is an unexpected survival; not surprisingly it is the latest. The question can be viewed in a different light however. The fact that Fíthal survived until this era is a testament to his deep connections and relevance to the cultures that kept his memory alive in tales and ballads both in Scotland and Ireland.

¹¹⁹James MacPherson, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 498.

¹²⁰Sharon Arbuthnot, 'The Manuscript Tradition of *Cóir Anmann*', *Studia Celtica* 35 (2001), pp. 285–298.

¹²¹Sharon Arbuthnot, 'Fíthal in *Cóir Anmann*', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 20 (2000), pp. 197–200.

4.4 Conclusion

The poems presented in this chapter are of varying dates and intentions, but they demonstrate that Fíthal was a subject of interest from the earliest legal poets until the thirteenth century and beyond, even appearing (though in a highly altered form) in MacPherson's *Ossian*. In early Irish legal poetry, Fíthal is deployed in a wide variety of ways. His *roscad* poem was possibly created to give a 'just cause' for the Uí Néill invasion of the Bregian plain and, possibly, to cement their claims over that part of Ireland. The other two legal poems which feature Fíthal were intended as instructional texts, and aimed to give the student of Irish law a sense of what to study and how to go about studying it. For the authors represented in the *Duanaire Finn*, on the other hand, Fíthal and his sons were important enough to raise genealogical curiosity, and served as default legal authorities to help Finn and the *fián*-members out of legal complications. The author of the *Metrical Dindshenchas* saw Fíthal as an element in his mental picture of an idealised *óenach*, where wisdom, as well as horse racing, was on display for the gathered crowds. In the poems overall, Fíthal takes on a wide variety of roles, from wisdom figure to legal authority and, somewhat unexpectedly, as a messenger in MacPherson's *Ossian*.¹²² The authors of 'An Address to a Student of Law' and *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*, who were composing with a didactic purpose in mind put Fíthal on their lists as an authority whose works their students should memorise.

There is no clean and consistent distinction between the prose and poetic characterisations of Fíthal. As stated previously, the same authors wrote both prose and poetry, so that it is not unexpected that the same general view of Fíthal would prevail in both forms of writing. The decision to separate the poetry from the prose texts in this thesis was chosen on the basis of some very general differences of tone and dating, and to make organisation of the material easier for both the reader and writer. For the most part, the authors of early Irish literature observed no such distinction in their literary endeavours.

The only poem not analysed in this chapter is one which has been given its own chapter. It is the most important poem in Fíthal's dossier *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail*, 'The dialogue between Cormac and Fíthal'. To this poem we now turn.

¹²²Prof. Gillies suggests to me that MacPherson may have been led by an awareness of Welsh antiquarian usage to assume that the *bard* was the highest practitioner of 'bardism', and this may have motivated him to depose the *file* (Sc. G. *filidh*) from the top position.

Chapter 5

Edition of a Dialogue between Cormac and Fíthal

As discussed briefly in the preceding chapters, the place in which Fíthal changes from being an obscure legal and wisdom figure to a more widely known character in Irish literature is the poem analysed in this chapter. The poem is given its own chapter for two reasons: the need for a new edition which collates and analyses the poem in its own right; the important part that this poem plays in the evolution of the character of Fíthal. The goal of this chapter is to rectify the lack of a modern edition and to bring attention to this, the most remarkable in the corpus of Fíthal references. There are four manuscript witnesses to the *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail* (hereafter *Immacallam*), a title bestowed for convenience since none of the manuscript witnesses gives the poem a proper title. These are: Trinity College Dublin (TCD) MS 1339 pg. 149 (hereafter A), Bodleian MS Rawlinson B512 fl 16v b (hereafter B), TCD MS 1337 pg. 40 b (hereafter C), and Bodleian MS. Ir. d. 5 (fragment) (hereafter F).

The poem consists of a dialogue between the mythical King of Ireland, Cormac mac Airt,¹ and the equally mythical judge, Fíthal. The metre of the poem is *rannaigeacht* with a shortening of the number of syllables in the first line, which is common in poetic dialogues.² The poem contains nine stanzas and a verse spoken by Fíthal begins and ends the poem. A title is prefixed to C; however, this title has much in common with the prologue to the *Immacallam*, which is in B, and is hardly a proper title to the poem itself.

The poem consists of an argument in relation to a feast that Cormac seems to have held without inviting Fíthal. The prologue and title attached to B and C respectively attempt to explain the background to the poem by describing the circumstances that gave rise to the nine

¹Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977).

²Eleanor Knott, *Irish Syllabic Poetry 1200-1600*, 2nd edition (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), pp. 13–15.

original stanzas. The prologue describes a ‘substantial little feast’ held by Cormac at Tara without inviting Fíthal. Taking this as an insult, Fíthal confronts Cormac on the following day and complains about not having been invited. After the explanation of the circumstances, the prologue in MS B interjects two additional stanzas to the poem before giving the original poem. The poem proper presents the argument in a deliberately obscure way, which nevertheless reveals the status of Fíthal and Cormac as contrasting wisdom figures within the conventions of the Irish tradition. Fíthal threatens to leave Cormac over the slight, while Cormac attempts to minimise the damage done to his relationship with Fíthal. Later, the poets of the Classical Gaelic era used the *Immacallam* as an *exemplum* of the moody character of poets, which great kings must endure (see Section 4.3.1).

The poem is important because it illuminates at three levels. First, it could be supposed that the poem was originally composed as an exploration of the relationship of a king to his judge. This relationship was always potentially contentious, because of the tension between a tradition bearer such as a judge and a person making executive decisions about the daily management of a community.³ The delicate balance of interests involved could easily cause misunderstandings of several kinds. Second, this poetic conflict provided a source for later literary productions concerning kingship and its relationship with other sources of traditional wisdom. Third, this poem brings Fíthal out of his relatively obscure place in the mythological fringes of early Irish law and places him in a more accessible literary setting, which poets and other authors of early Irish literature could, and did, develop further.

By the end of the poem, Cormac and Fíthal have not come to a proper resolution of their disagreement. In the course of the poem, Cormac emphasises that he has shown the proper love for his *amus* ‘hireling’ (a reference to the fact that judges were considered part of the *áes dána*⁴), and that he is unwilling to be without Fíthal in his role as judge. Significantly, Fíthal is given the last stanza. The phrase which opens the poem, *ní ba mé*, is repeated twice there, once at the beginning and once at the end.⁵ While it is very common in Irish syllabic poetry to end the poem with the first line, repeating it within the last stanza accentuates Fíthal’s anger at Cormac’s slight to his honour and shows that he is still resentful. The outcome of this argument is not explained in any of the MSS, and in literary terms the outcome of the *Immacallam* seems moot. No other stories which feature Fíthal allude to the *Immacallam* and what lasting effect it might have had upon his relationship with Cormac.

³Marilyn Gerriets, ‘The King as Judge in Early Ireland’, *Celtica* 20 (1988), pp. 45–52. See also Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 23–25.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 51–56.

⁵Eleanor Knott, *Irish Syllabic Poetry 1200-1600*, 2nd edition (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), p. 13.

5.1 Discussion of Manuscript Witnesses

The several manuscripts preserve *Immacallam* in various states of completeness. A, B, and C have complete copies of the poem. F is a fragmentary version of the poem closely following A, but it does have one interesting textual variation which is discussed in the section on the reconstructed text. Linguistically, A's is the oldest version of the poem, while B and C are slightly later. Textually, A stands a little apart from B and C, which are closely related to one another, as is shown in the following discussion.

5.1.1 'A': TCD MS 1339 (The Book of Leinster)

Our poem appears on page 149 of TCD MS 1339, which is also known as 'The Book of Leinster'. The poem begins 10.5 cm from the top left of the verso page. The binding is clearly in poor condition and the text itself is damaged by a tear in the manuscript which begins at 18.4 cm and ends, when it joins a hole, at 20.1 cm from the top left corner. This hole is likely have resulted from the tanning process, since the scribe clearly wrote the text of the poem around the hole. The damage from the tear occurred after the text was written, but affects only a part of two lines. More frustrating to the transcriber is a stain that covers the entire left-hand column. The stain becomes darker as it extends down the column, and is especially dark near the hole. The opaqueness of the stain in this area nearly obscures the last two stanzas of the poem on the left-hand side near the binding.

The transcription presented in this edition has been checked against Bergin and Best's diplomatic edition of the Book of Leinster.⁶ It is of the highest quality and no errors were detected by the electronic digital scan of the manuscript that we conducted. As a result, this transcription is found to be identical to the transcription provided by us here in Appendix A.

5.1.2 'B': Rawl B512 116v b

There are two parts to the text as found in Rawl. B512.⁷ The first part is the prologue, which begins at 6.5 cm in the right-hand column and ends at 16.5 cm in the same column. The body of the poem begins at 16.5 cm and ends at 25.5 cm in the right-hand column. The binding is in fair to poor condition and there are stains around the outer edge of the manuscript. There is also a stain which extends through the lower half of the prologue and through the entire text of the poem. Despite these imperfections, the text is extremely clear and written in a bold hand.

⁶*The Book of Leinster, formerly Leabar na Núachongbála*, Best, R. I., O. Bergin, M. A. O'Brien, and A. O'Sullivan, eds., vol. 3 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954–1983), pp. 623–4.

⁷For a more detailed description of the manuscript see Brian Ó Cuív, ed., *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001), p. 223–254.

A transcription, with translation, of the prologue and a transcription, without translation, of the poem are provided by Kuno Meyer⁸ in the Appendix of *Hibernica Minora*, pp. 82–3. We checked both the prologue and the poem against the manuscript and certain alterations to Meyer’s transcription were warranted; a new transcription is found in Appendix A with textual variants incorporated into the *apparatus criticus* of the edition.

5.1.3 ‘C’: TCD 1337 (H.3.18) p. 40 b

MS TCD 1337 is divided into three sections, and each section is bound separately. The page on which the poem appears is the second. The page itself contains three poems in the same hand. The last of these poems is the one under discussion here.

The page is 12 cm wide by 18.5 cm high. The top and bottom of the page are worn and cracked. The page number is written in a hand other than that of the scribe of the poems between the line of words at the top of the page and the top of the right-hand column. There is a stain starting 2.3 cm from the top and ending at 3.1 cm from the top. The MS is also slightly folded in places; the fold may have been present at the time of writing, since the letters are missing the ink where the fold appears. The title of our poem starts in the left-hand column but is justified with the rest of the column on the left, i. e. next to the binding. The poem itself is 9.8 cm long and ends 4 cm from the bottom edge of the MS. This blank space indicates that this is the last poem in the present section. A new single-column poem begins on the next page. The title of our poem is 05 cm from the beginning of the poem and .4 cm from the end of the previous poem.

There is a tear which has been stitched with thread 5 cm from the bottom edge of the MS and it runs for 1 cm on the right side of the MS. This also affects the verso of the folio. The MS is also slightly cracked in several places, between 6.1 cm from the bottom and 5.3 cm from the bottom. The lower right corner has been sheared off with a sharp implement.

The poem is written in a clear but slightly cramped hand. Unlike the other MSS, the letters which indicate which stanzas of the poem are spoken by each character are written on the right-hand side rather than the left, and are nearly flush with the binding. Each stanza begins with a capital letter which corresponds in size to the letter denoting the speaker.

On the whole, the text of our poem is unaffected by the defects of the MS. However, the ink from the recto side of the page has begun to run through the page and is slightly visible on the verso side.

⁸*Hibernica Minora*. Being a fragment of an Old-Irish treatise on the Psalter, with translation, notes and glossary, and an Appendix containing extracts hitherto unpublished from MS. Rawlinson, B. 512 in the Bodleian Library. Edited by Kuno Meyer. With a facsimile. *Anecdota Oxoniensia*. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press.

5.1.4 'F': MS. Ir. d. 5.

MS. Ir. d. 5. is actually two fragments (hereafter fragment A and fragment B).⁹ The identification of our poem in this MS was made by Brian Ó Cuív.¹⁰ MS. Ir. d. 5 survives in the form of two narrow vertical strips, comprising all that remains of a large folium from which at least three such strips have been cut. The text of the folium was written, as often, in two columns. On the recto side (where our poem was written), the vertical cuts were made (1) near the right-hand side of col. 1, (2) near the left-hand side of col. 2, and (3) near the right-hand side of col. 2. Fragment A is the strip between cuts (1) and (2), the strip between cuts (2) and (3) is lost, and Fragment B is the strip between cut (3) and the recto right-hand margin. (There may have been another cut or cuts to the left of cut (1), but since all text to the left of cut (1) is lost, this question does not concern us.) Our poem was written in the lower portion of col. 1 and the upper portion of col. 2. Accordingly, Fragment A contains (lower left) the right-hand extremities of the lines containing the earlier stanzas, and also (upper right) the left-hand extremities of the lines containing the later stanzas, while Fragment B contains (upper left) the right-hand extremities of the lines containing the later stanzas of our poem. Spaces before the beginning of our poem and after its end help to confirm that this placement of the surviving fragment is the right one, and that the overall dimensions of F corresponded closely to the versions found in other MSS.

The hand of the scribe of this manuscript is bold and clear. Other than the fact that this manuscript is fragmentary, there appear to be no other physical defects or stains. The manuscript is still in excellent condition and shows no signs of wear. The cuts made to the manuscript to create the fragments were made with a knife or other sharp and easily handled implement and did not cause any other damage to the fragment. Ó Cuív suggests very plausibly that this was done for the purpose of using the fragments as binding support for a book.¹¹

5.2 The Prologue

The prologue of the poem in B and the superscription in C are closely similar in content. The latter is, in effect, a one-sentence summary of the former. Is B an expansion of C or is C an abbreviation of B? There is not enough evidence to come to a firm conclusion. Although there are suggestive similarities, in content and provenance, between Rawlinson B512 and TCD 1337, the composite nature of both MSS complicates the question of identifying possible direct connections between B and C. The versions of the actual poem in B and C are very close to one another (e. g. they agree, against A, in the order of stanzas 2 and 4), but the minor variation

⁹Brian Ó Cuív, ed., *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001), p. 21.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 21–23.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 21.

between them is sufficient to indicate that neither is directly dependent on the other. In terms of the development of the *Immacallam* we are inclined to view the longer version of the preliminary matter in B as an expansion of the shorter version in C rather than the other way around; but this is, in the last resort, a subjective judgement.

The preliminary matter in B and C may have been generated by the line in stanza four (= stanza 2 in A), where Cormac talks about drinking and entertainments. Yet, in the poem itself Fíthal seems to be angrier about Cormac spending time with others than with him. This irritation is predicated on the legal axiom that a king should never be without his judge in attendance, even during the labour-intensive sowing season.¹² In this sense, Cormac has broken the bond of a king to his judge. It is this sense of broken bond which drives the poem, and is implicit in the prologue.

The prologue attached to B can be broken into two parts. The first is the prose introduction, of a sort which is commonly added to traditional material in the later stages of the transmission of poetical material.¹³ The second part comprises two stanzas of poetry in the same style and metre as the original *Immacallam*. The prologue is separated from the *Immacallam* by the line ‘Conidh and do-rónsat na rvnna,’ which clearly demarcates the beginning of the *Immacallam* proper from the foregoing material.

In distinguishing added material from original material, the conservatism of the scribe comes to the fore. While the prologue provides the context, or *senchus*, of the poem, his use of *na runna*, with the definite article, approximates to ‘the famous verses’, and places them in a separate dimension from what has gone before. The substance of this material is protected by its traditional status, like holy writ. This was perfectly compatible with casual, small-scale textual innovation, which could, and did, take place in this poem, as elsewhere in early Irish literature. It may well be that orality, either directly, in the transmission of the *Immacallam*, or indirectly, in the development of an attitude to transmitted text in general, played a part in shaping the prologue as we find it.

5.3 Features of the Poem

The text of MS A is the oldest of the four versions and is linguistically and orthographically the earliest. It contains very little that can be considered out of the ordinary in a Middle Irish text. As indicated above, the relationship of B and C is complicated by the question of the prologue; however, the text of the poem in B and C is fairly consistent in relation to spelling, both in adopting newer spellings and in retaining older spellings.

¹²Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 52.

¹³Robin Flower, ‘Quidam Scotigena .i. Discipulus Boëthii or Boëthius and the Four Conditions of a Tale’, *Ériu* 8 (1916), pp. 150–154.

The main divergence between A and BC lies in the switching and replacing of lines in stanzas 2 and 4. As regards B and C, either could be indebted to the other indirectly, even if it is unlikely that B is a copy of C or vice versa. If one of B and C derives from A, the combination of overall closeness with the transposition in stanzas 2 and 4 could suggest a text remembered rather than copied. The close equivalence of meaning of the ‘swapped’ lines is certainly characteristic of what happened to orally transmitted texts. Again, the other significant divergence is in the presentational matter of the ‘stage directions’ which indicate who spoke each verse in the dialogue. Had we been dealing with textual copying these visual signposts might have been transmitted more faithfully. But those are mere straws in the wind.

F contains little information to add to our discussion of the MSS. The first point to mention is found in stanza 4, line 4 of A and B, which reads: ‘bíd ítu ar n-ól a Fíthail’. In fragment A of F, the spelling ‘hitu’ can be clearly seen in the upper right-hand corner. The second item of interest is that whereas in A and B Fíthal’s and Cormac’s names are abbreviated to a single letter followed by a period, the scribe of F partially writes out the names next to, and even encroaching on, the capital letter which begins each stanza of dialogue. Otherwise, the text of F bears a very close resemblance to that of A. Although, there is not enough text remaining in F to enable us to make a firm statement as to its closeness to A, the two MSS appear to be very nearly related.

5.4 Dating the Poem

Several features mark the prologue as later than the Old Irish period.¹⁴ The first feature is the use of the independent pronoun, as in the prose part of the prologue ‘ní rucad d’ól na fleidhe hé’, where the independent pronoun is the object of the verb *rucad*, which would not have been usual in Old Irish. The second is the use of the verbal particle ‘ro-’ as an indicator of the simple past tense. For example, in ‘Fíthel ro-chan inso’, the verbal particle ‘ro-’ is prefixed to the preterite of the verb *canaid*, ‘sings’, as a marker of the past tense rather than as indicator of the perfect. The third feature is the fossilisation *at-bert*, the object pronoun (neuter) in the past tense of the verb *as-beir* ‘says’ in ‘at-bert Fíthel fris.’ On the other hand, the use of *ro* instead of Early Modern *do* in *ro-chan* may be noted as a mark of the relative earliness.

As stated above, the prologue to the *Immacallam* seeks to explain the circumstances which gave rise to the original poem. Yet there is a slight difference of tone between the prologue and the *Immacallam* itself. The prologue shows an interpretation of the relationship between the two men in which Cormac reacts more strongly against Fíthal’s complaint. This is especially clear in the stanza immediately prior to the beginning of the *Immacallam*, where Cormac states

¹⁴Kim McCone, *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader: Including an Introduction to Middle Irish* (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005), pp. 1–4.

that he is wiser than his father, that his rightness and sense are better, and that true judgement is better judgement. This would seem to indicate that his judgement, being truer, is better than Fíthal's judgement. Cormac is thus presented in the prologue as more intolerant toward Fíthal than in the poem itself. Here, Cormac seems to be searching for a way to calm Fíthal and to placate his justified anger at the breaking of the bond between judge and king, in-as-much as Fíthal did not receive an invitation to the feast.

5.5 Editorial Methodology

The editorial approach adopted in this chapter is as follows. The prologue in B is treated separately, and the summary in C is seen as supplementary to it. This separation is expedient because, although the prologue is intimately connected to the poem, it is a separate composition from the original text of the poem. As already noted, the author of the prologue sets his section aside from the main text of the poem by the line: 'Conidh and do rónsat na rynn' and in linguistic terms the poem is more consistently Middle Irish than the prologue, as will be shown. The edition of the prologue is lightly normalised.

In this chapter, the poem is reconstructed with reference to all the extant witnesses, most notably A, B, and C. F does not contain any readings which differ from A in a substantial way, apart from the reading 'hitu' noted above. As A is found in the earliest MS source and as a rule supplies the best readings by linguistic and metrical criteria, A is treated as the exemplar text. The readings of B and C are presented in the *apparatus*. Diplomatic transcriptions of A, B, and C, including the prologue where available, are provided in the Appendix. Missing length marks are indicated with a macron where language, metre, and manuscript evidence support it.

5.6 The Prologue of *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail*

Fithel rocan inso iar nol fleidi bici bríghmairi do cormac secha 7 rofrecart cormac eisivm .i. fecht bai cormac ac ól fleidi brigmaire i temraig báí dono fithel feígbriathrach isin baili 7 ní rvcad dól na fleidhe hé. Doríacht cormac arabáarach ina tegh rí 7 atbert fithel fris. Ól atibis secham sa areír a cormac ar fithel. Ised ar cormac nocha níbed hathair sech maitisi ar fithel conid de rochan fithel 7 ro fregair cormac.

Maitisi fíal finngaine.
Brethem ro baí ic art ainfer.
Secha ní rachad dól.
Ar ór gall 7 gaidel.

Isam gaithi ina art.

Ised bís mo smacht do sír
is feir mo cert is mo cíall.
Is mo berim breth co fír.

Conidh and do rónsat na rvnna.

5.7 Translation

Fíthal recited this after Cormac had consumed a small lively feast without him, and Cormac answered him, i. e. an occasion when Cormac was consuming a lively feast in Tara, [and] Fíthal [the] keen-worded, was in the place, and he was not brought to consume the feast. Cormac arrived in his king's house on the morrow and Fíthal said to him: "you had a feast without me last night, Cormac", said Fíthal. "Aye," said Cormac. "Your father would not have done so without my foster-father," said Fíthal. So that is how Fíthal recited and Cormac answered:

Fíthal My foster-father, noble Finngaine,
 He was the judge of Art Aínfer;
 He (= Art) would not go without him to drink
 For the gold of foreigners and Gaels.

Cormac I am wiser than Art,
 That is [the basis of] my rule is forever;
 better is my right and my sense,
 I give more judgements truly.

So it was then that they composed the [following] verses.

5.8 Edition of *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail*

Fíthal Níba mē.
 linfes do neoch dara thráth
 gel *cech* nua lond *cech* scíth
 nī hinund frīth fogeib cāch

5

Cormac A Fíthail
 ebair coirm cid iar līthaib.

1 Níba] B Nvcua, C Nugua 1 mē] B mé 2 linfes] B lilfes, C Anfus(?) 2 do] C ag 2 neoch] C neach
2 dara] B dar, C dara 2 thráth] B tráth, C trath 3 cech] B gach, C cach 3 nua] B núa 3 lond] B lonn,
C lonn 3 cech] B cach, C cach 3 scíth] B sgíth, C scith 4 nī] B ní 4 hinund] B hinnann, C hinand(?)
4 frīth] B frith, C frith 4 fogeib] B fogeib, C fogaib 4 cāch] B cách 5 Fíthail] B Fithail, C Fithail 6 ebair
coirm cid iar līthaib.] B an biucan gurdar síthaig, C an biucan corbam síthaig

		ní íath do chor [leg. dochor] for rāthaib fāthaig cid fīr nach Fíthail.
10	Fíthal	A Chormaic co mmét ualle 7 airdaire cētlud rīg rodar n-inlaig condar dimdaig diar tarbairt.
15	Cormac	A Fíthail an ris condar sídaig bid contracht for muir mór bíd ítu ar n-ól a Fíthail.
20	Fíthal	Nīmda muad atbērsa frit co llór lúath. iss ed is messu fuair lāech. bith oc tigernu gāeth guach.
25	Cormac	Atbērsa cid olc ra nech. ní chēlsa friar ndebech(?) iss ed is messu tic tech amus anaith airbirech.
30	Fíthal	Nī thibér. šerc do neoch nacham chara. noco tairniubsa mo bríg cid cian om thír domrala.
	Cormac	Ór oc rīgaib co rogail otá tossach in domain.

7 ní] C ní 7 íath] B íad, C maith 7 do chor] B dochar, C dochor 7 for] B ar 7 rāthaib] B rathaibh, C frat-h(?) 8 fāthaig] B fáthaig, C fathaig 8 nach] B nach 8 Fíthail] BC Fíthail 9 Chormaic] B Cormaic, C Corbmac 10 mmét] B méit, C meid 10 ualle] B váilli, C nuaille 10 airdaire] B orrdirc, C nordaire 11 cētlud rīg rodar n-inlaig] B cid einech rīgh rontidnaic, C cid enech rīg rontidnaic 12 condar] B atar, C adar 12 dimdaig] B dimaig, C dimdag 12 diar] B di air, C diar 12 tarbairt] B torbairt, C toirbairt 13 Fíthail] B Fíthail, C Fíthail 14 an ris condar sídaig] B ebur cid linn iar lithaibh, C ebar linn cid iar lithaib 15 bid] B bíd 15 contracht] B contracht, C contracht 15 for] B ar i, C ar in 15 muir mór] C mvir mor 16 ítu] B itv, C ita, F hitu 16 ar n-ól] C iar nol 16 Fíthail] B Fíthail, C Fiathail 17 Nīmda muad] B Is dom fuáth, C Is dom fuath 18 atbērsa frit] B sloinnfetsa deit, C sloindfetsa 18 co llór lúath] B cv leir lúath, C co ler luath 19 iss ed] BC Is ed 19 messu] B mesa, C mesam 19 fuair] B fívar, C fuair 19 lāech] BC laech 20 bith] B beith 20 oc] B ac, C ic 20 tigernu] B tigerna, C tigerna 20 gāeth] B, gaeth, C goeth 20 guach] B gvach, C guach 21 Atbērsa cid olc] B Gid meisi ní céil, C Gid mese ni cel 21 ra] B ar, C ar 21 nech] C nech 22 ní chēlsa friar] B bid vasal gid air, C adirsa tria(?) air 22 ndebech(?)] B deibeche, C debeche 23 iss ed is] B Is ed is, C is ed is 23 messu] B messa, C mesam 23 tic] C (?)cc 23 tech] B tech 24 amus] B amus, C amus 24 anaith] B innaif, C anaith 24 airbirech] B oirbirech, C orbēch(?) 25 Nī thibér] B Ní hail dam, C Ní hail dam 26 šerc do neoch] B serc dvine, C (?)cc dvine 26 nacham chara] B nácham cara, C nacham cara 27 noco tairniubsa] B nvga torem ort, C no chatorneb ort 27 mo bríg] B mo brig, C mo brig 28 cid cian] B cid cian, C ni cian 28 om thír] om tír, C om tir 28 domrala] B domrala, C domral-(?) 29 Ór oc rīgaib co rogail] B Is gnáth o tosach domain, C is gnath otosach domvin 30 otá tossach in domain.] B ór ac rīgaib va rogain, C or ac rīgaib ua rogain

is lesc lemm beith cen amus
 7 ro charus m'folaig

Fíthal Níba mē.
 gēbat ōm rīg bethad cé
 35 iar ndīgna óir 7 ech
 cia beith nech nība mé. N.

5.9 Translation

Fíthal It will not be me
 who will cleave to someone beyond his time.
 Bright is every new man, irascible is every tired man,
 not identical is the treasure that every [man] finds.

5 Cormac Oh Fíthal
 Ale is drunk, even after festivities.
 It is no proper welcome (?) for guarantors to be disadvantaged;
 [there are] knowledgeable men though it is
 true that they are not Fíthals.

10 Fíthal Oh Cormac
 with [such] an amount of pride and fame;
 the companionship of kings has divided us,
 so that we are displeased at our humiliation.

Cormac Oh Fíthal
 15 wait [a while], so that we are at peace.
 There will be an ebb-tide on a great sea (i. e. after a flood-tide),
 there will be thirst after drinking, oh Fíthal.

Fíthal I am not myself a noble,
 I shall say to you swiftly enough:
 20 This is the worst that a warrior got
 Being with a lord wise but deceitful.

Cormac I will say it although it offends someone,
 I will not hide [it as a stay] against our falling out:
 the thing that worst suits a house
 25 [is] an unsuitable (?), reproachful servant.

31 is lesc lemm] B Nirb áil dam, C nir hail dom **31** beith] B beith, C bith **31** cen amus] B gan amos, C cian amus **32** ro charus m'folaig] B ro caros m'folaid, C ro charus mfolaid **33** Níba mē.] B cian gardi caither mo ré, C cian gairde chaither mo re. **34** gēbat ōm rīg bethad cé] B oc ríghaib in domain ce, C og rigaib in domain ce. **35** iar ndīgna] B arm choemv **35** óir] B óir, C oir **36** cia beith] B ce gaba, C cia gabad **36** nība] B ní, C ní **36** mé] B me, C me **36** N] C Nugua me.

	Fíthal	I will not give love to anyone who does not love me. I will not humble my importance though I find myself far from my land.
30	Cormac	Gold [resides] with kings of great valour from the beginning of the world; I am reluctant to be without a servant and I love (lit. have loved) my substance.
35	Fíthal	It will not be me whom they will take from my king of this life after spurning of gold and horses; though it be someone, it will not be me.

5.10 Notes

brígmair DIL D 190.43–45 translates this ‘after Cormac had enjoyed a convivial little drinking-feast.’

atibis 2 sing. preterite (originally perfective) of *ibid* ‘drinks’, with MI petrified object pronoun.

2 linfes 3rd per. rel. fut. of *lenaid* ‘remains’ see DIL L 99.7.

4 hinund from *inunn*, *innonn* ‘alike’ see DIL I 294.17.

7 dochor ‘disadvantage, hurt’ see DIL D 228.224.66.

7 íath ‘land’ is sometimes confused with *fiad* ‘land’ (see DIL 3 *fiad* in MSS of later poetry, and it is possible that the poem originally had *fiad* (see DIL 5 *fiad* ‘honour, respect, reverence, esp. the honour bestowed on a guest according to his rank’).

8 fáthaig nom. plur. masc. from *fáthach* ‘possessed of knowledge or skill’ see DIL F 47.33.

10 airdairc (also *airdirc* or *ordairc*) needed for metre. ‘renowned, famous’ see DIL A 186.79.

11 cētlud rí **rodar n-inlaig** see DIL I 237.28–29.

12 and 14 condar cf. L. Breatnach, ‘An Mheán-Ghaeilge’, p. 324 (312.194) for 1 pl. copula forms like this, which replaces OI *condan*.¹⁵

12 dimdaig nom. plur. masc. from *dimdach* ‘ungrateful, unsatisfied’ see DIL D 215.119.19.

¹⁵Liam Breatnach, ‘An Mheán-Ghaeilge’, in Kim McCone et al., eds., *Stair na Gaeilge*: in ómos do Pádraig Ó Fiannachta (Maigh Nuad: Roinn na Sean-Ghaeilge, Coláiste Phádraig, Maigh Nuad, 1994), pp. 221–333.

12 tarbairt see *do-airbir*.

17 muad A poetic word translated ‘noble’, but it refers literally to external qualities of rank. It could also have the meaning ‘dejected’, which could indicate a double meaning intended by the poet in this case. See DIL M 177.44.

22 ndebech(?) A’s reading is difficult at this point, but B and C support it. From *deibech* (see also *debach*) ‘strife, contention’ see DIL D 200.1.30–38.

24 anaith (anáith?) see DIL A 323.5–9.

27 -toirniub see DIL *do-airindi*.

29 rogail *ro* + *gal* (also *gail*) ‘excess of valor’ or ‘great valor’. The particle *ro* here is used as an intensifier.

32 m’folaig for *folaid* (?): see DIL F 280.59.

5.11 Literary Analysis

As intimated elsewhere in this thesis, this poem is extremely important for the development of Fíthal. This is the earliest source outside the legal literature where Fíthal appears as a character in his own right. In addition, this is also the first appearance of Fíthal at his most active form as the angry and intransigent wisdom figure. While recent theorising of the relationship of king to judge posits that the king was the ultimate arbiter of legal matters in early Ireland, this poem seems to indicate that the king was not a king without his chief judge.¹⁶ On the other hand, it also demonstrates the strength of the relationship of Cormac and Fíthal.

As this is the earliest instance of Fíthal outside the law tracts, it is possible to argue that it was the pivotal point from which the figure of Fíthal proceeded from the more esoteric legal material into the wider literary prose and poetic traditions. This poem sets all the parameters for Fíthal’s career in later literature: his connection with Cormac, the fact that he is a judge, the wisdom aspects of his character, and the fact that he is involved with, if not a practitioner himself (an attribute that would be added later), of poetry. This would seem to indicate that all the later literature could have drawn general inspiration from this poem, or indeed that this poem directly or indirectly influenced the rest.

To judge from our understanding of the earlier legal literature involving Fíthal, it would seem that this poem was made specifically to raise Fíthal’s profile to a more exposed literary level. The author would have needed to know Fíthal’s character as a wisdom-figure through his appearances in early Irish law tracts. The connection to Cormac mac Airt was casually accepted

¹⁶See Marilyn Gerriets, ‘The King as Judge in Early Ireland’, *Celtica* 20 (1988).

by later authors, especially in the Fenian tradition; but the origin of the connection is unclear. The author may have chosen it because Cormac, as the wise king *par excellence*, needed a wise judge *par excellence* to enable him to fulfil all the requirements of a mythical king-hero. Being such a figure, Fíthal could provide the required complement to Cormac, at the same time adding an association with kingly wisdom and just ruling to his own ‘portfolio’.

For the poets of the Early Modern period, this poem would involve a further twist: the dramatic tension between poet and patron (see Section 4.3.1). For the tradition embodied in the present poem was consistently interpreted by them as a prototypical instance of the unstable emotional state of poets, with the suggestion that conflict with their patrons was inherent in the poet-patron relationship. The ideological point being made was, of course, that if the patrons were too hard on their poets they risked losing their support and thence also the praise which they needed to be kings. This dramatic tension is also reflected in the Fenian material, especially in *Duanaire Finn* XLVII, where Cormac encounters Fíthal in a doublet of Cormac’s own rise to power (see Section 4.2.3).

5.12 Conclusion

This edition of the *Immacallam Cormaic ocus Fíthail* has added to scholarly understanding of this interesting and unique Middle Irish poem and has demonstrated its importance in the literary ‘career’ of Fíthal. That the poem was composed with deliberate intent to raise the profile of Fíthal in the eyes of the early Irish literary establishment is highly probable. How far this enterprise had to do with Fíthal alone, and how far it was fuelled by interest in the complementary relationship between Fíthal and Cormac, is still debatable; but the poem certainly had a large effect upon later literary output in relation to Fíthal and Cormac.

This chapter represents the last of the textual evidence relating to Fíthal. The next chapter considers this evidence as a whole to demonstrate further the developing image of Fíthal and to draw into consideration aspects of the evidence which could not be dealt with in the earlier chapters.

Chapter 6

Concepts of Fíthal

While previous chapters dwelt upon Fíthal and his connection to Wisdom Literature across time, this chapter attempts to bring together facets of the character of Fíthal which went unexplored in Chapter 2 and are only briefly discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. These facets are: the genealogy of Fíthal, Fíthal as a wisdom figure, Fíthal as a literary figure, Fíthal as a judge, Fíthal in comparison with other mythological figures, and Fíthal's place in theoretical discussions of early Irish literature. The aim of this chapter is two-fold: first, to explore these themes and facets of the 'character' of Fíthal; but also to discuss theoretical approaches to figures like Fíthal and to place Fíthal within these theoretical discussions.

This integrative approach is not without complications. As we have shown in earlier chapters, the role of Fíthal changed over time and developed an expanded set of characteristics. For instance, in the earliest text to contain Fíthal, *Finn'sruth Fíthail* (see Section 3.9), his character has only two aspects: as a teacher of legal wisdom and as a judge of the traditional law. In later texts, he is given the attributes of a poet, perhaps reflecting changed authorship or audience, i. e. a shift from the hands of the lawyers to those of the poets. However this shift happened, his primary function as a judge remained. In most of the extant sources, he is shown primarily as a judge, and only secondarily as a poet and a master of esoteric knowledge. Treating the several aspects of Fíthal's character thematically sometimes means abandoning chronological order, but it brings out otherwise obscure connections and enhances our understanding of the individual aspects.

This approach is hampered by the scantness of primary source material. As with early Irish literature in general, only fragments of a larger amount of source material appear to have survived. In Fíthal's case, there are two reasons for this. Fíthal was a very specific character, with only a few restricted roles in the literature in which he appears. Unlike Cormac mac Airt or Cú Chulainn, Fíthal's power to inspire literature was always rather limited. Indeed, given the low survival rate of early texts in the modern era, it is perhaps fortunate that we have as

much as we do. Second, even after the expansion of his role by later authors, Fíthal was always primarily a judge. As we saw earlier, the law was often used by authors as a device to move the plot forward or to extricate their characters from threatening legal predicaments. The usefulness of Fíthal to authors was hence rather limited, and he was consigned, in effect, to supporting roles. He was thus unable to develop like other characters. This, in its turn, would have negative effects on his popularity within the literature.

The surviving material nevertheless contains much scope for further analysis. As stated at various points in this thesis, a general methodological framework has yet to be constructed which can resolve all of the problems facing the scholar of early Irish literature. In this chapter, some of the theoretical and integrative approaches of other scholars are presented and a limited theory to explain the standing of Fíthal within early Irish literature is proposed. The reason why this thesis could not have proceeded from a theoretical starting point is instructive. The primary evidence needed to be painstakingly collected and analysed before we could legitimately turn to theoretical connections. This is not an isolated problem, but one which affects all areas of early Irish studies. The limited theory presented below is thus based on an empirical plotting of the trajectory of Fíthal in Early Irish literature. The time has not yet come when we could proceed from a soundly based general theory to draw conclusions about the status of a character like Fíthal in early Irish literature.

6.1 Genealogy of Fíthal

Genealogy was always of great importance to the early Irish scholars, as is indicated by the amount of vellum dedicated to this one genre, covering both secular rulers and saints.¹ A place in a genealogy guaranteed a person's place within the aristocracy of early Ireland and would thus be of help in the dynastic competition that constituted early Irish succession.² These genealogies include mythological figures as founders of particular clans or septs. These mythological connections could and would be changed depending upon dynastic politics, often to cement treaties and marriages.³ In the case of Fíthal, there is no line of historical persons who claim Fíthal or either of his two sons, Socht and Flaithrí, as direct or indirect ancestor. This, however, does not mean that Fíthal himself was without a pedigree. In fact, he has five genealogies in the

¹Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 233–235. See also, T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 111–134; Rolf Baumgarten, 'Co Nómad n-Ó: An Early Irish Socio-legal Timescale', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17-18 (2003-4); Neil McLeod, 'Kinship', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 1–22; Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 239–258; Pádraig Ó Riain, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985).

²Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 191–214.

³David E. Thornton, 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy in Early Medieval Ireland and Wales', in Huw Pryce, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 83-91.

literature. However, before discussing these, a note of caution must be sounded here: possession of a genealogy carries no implication of historicity. There is no original person Fíthal that can be reached through textual analysis or literary reconstruction. The study of his genealogies presented below is placed here because they exist and because they form part of the dossier of the literary character known as Fíthal.

The genealogies of literary characters from the early period are numerous. Finn mac Cumail, like Fíthal, has several. It is clear that the literary genealogies could be re-worked just like those of historical characters, or perhaps even more so. Whereas the motives for this re-working of historical genealogies are well-understood nowadays, those affecting literary characters have yet to be fully explored. The circumstances of each of the genealogies of Fíthal are discussed here to explicate this side of his character in the early Irish tradition.

6.1.1 The Differing Genealogies of Fíthal

Before discussing his pedigrees in detail, we should mention one anomalous item which concerns Fíthal. This is not really a lineage at all, but is inserted in a list contained within the genealogies of the saints of Ireland in the Book of Leinster (see Section 3.14). The list gives the names of Bishops of Ireland after St Patrick. The name of Fíthal appears within this list. While one cannot discount the possibility that another Fíthal was intended, the most likely explanation is that the list (which is deeply suspect) has borrowed our Fíthal's name, based on his law-making associations and Patrick's, to help fill the gap between St Patrick and the historical period.

The first genealogy discussed here was referred to in chapters 3 and 4 (see Sections 3.10 and 4.2.2), since it appears both in *Acallam na Senórach* and *Duanaire Finn*. The genealogy goes thus: Trénmór → Cumall + Bodmann → Fíthal. As explained earlier, this genealogy makes an unexpected association for the character of Fíthal. As a genealogy, however, it poses no difficulties, though the author does not explain in which order the sons of Cumall were born, and does not explicitly state that they were from two mothers. The poem may make no mention of polygamy, but given the fact that early Irish society seems to have condoned the practice, this would probably not have struck an early Irish audience as out of the ordinary.⁴

This genealogy imports Fíthal into the mythological framework of the Fenian stories. Although the intention behind this linkage may have been to provide Finn with access to the aura of law-giving wisdom which Fíthal possessed in the early period, its effect was to place Fíthal in the heart of the action. By becoming the half-brother of Finn, Fíthal gained access to the full range of Fenian tradition and it included him in the new literary pantheon which burgeoned

⁴Bart Jaski, 'Marriage Laws in Ireland and on the Continent in the Early Middle Ages', in Christine Meek and Katharine Simms, eds., *'The Fragility of Her Sex': Medieval Irishwomen in Their European Context* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996).

after the twelfth-century reforms.⁵ While the overall effect of this relocation was to rescue Fíthal from the obscurity of the ancient tales and associate him with one of the most popular and vital characters in Gaelic literature, it does not seem that this particular association was very productive in practice. Fíthal appears only a few times in the *fianaigecht* almost always in his traditional role as a judge acting in conjunction with Cormac. If this attempt to rescue Fíthal from literary oblivion was not very effective, Fíthal's attachment to Cormac survived the reorganisation of early Irish literature after the twelfth century. As Finn became a main focus of authorial attention including a connection to the court of Cormac mac Airt, Fíthal's own connection to Cormac, encapsulated in their poetic dialogue, proved more stable and enduring than this genealogical linkage.

The second genealogy derives from a legal background. The poem that contains the genealogy concerns the authors of the laws of Ireland. Entitled *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*, it is discussed in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.1.3). The genealogy is not given in a formal, connected way in the poem, but it can be pieced together from the information provided by the poet. The genealogy as constructed by poem's author run as follows: Caelchláen → Sencha → Fachtna → Fíthal.

Unlike the first genealogy of Fíthal, this one does not contain any mention of mothers. The author explains that Sencha, father of Fachtna, is not the same Sencha who is named as an ancestor of Morann, thereby preventing any speculation that the two men were related. The author does not state, but makes clear by giving a full genealogy, that Fíthal is not related to Sencha mac Ailella, who appears in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. Here then, Fíthal is given a genealogy that is free from complications caused by having an ancestor in common with other mythological or literary characters. It is interesting to note here that this author also does this for Morann.

This genealogy places Fíthal firmly in a family of jurists. There is no information about his great-grand father, Caelchláen, but the author of the poem describes Fíthal as a lord. This may carry an echo of a legal rule corresponding to the maxim that for a poet to rise to noble rank, his family must have held the qualifications of a noble poet for three generations.⁶ Thus, Caelchláen need not have been a judge, but Sencha and Fachtna definitely were; Fachtna, at least, is credited with the authorship of a legal text named *Tulbretha Fachtnai*, 'The Hasty Judgements of Fachtnae', which has not survived (if it ever existed).⁷ The description of Fíthal as a lord correlates with the way that the author of the first genealogy gives Fíthal the title of prince. That Fíthal was seen as belonging to the highest rank of judge, and possessing nobility because of that, is regularly attested in the literature relating to Fíthal.

⁵K. W. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003), pp. 105–130.

⁶Liam Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar: The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987), pp. 94–96.

⁷Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 314–315.

The purpose of the poem was to list the authors and the texts of early Irish law in a condensed manner and to exhort the student to study and learn these texts. The inclusion of genealogies for each of the main authors was a way of using the connotations of dynasty to emphasise professional credentials. Indeed, they stress the prospect that young lawyers could become ennobled like Fíthal if they, and their family, continued their studies. The author was also careful in constructing the genealogies so that they did not overlap, e. g. ensuring that Fíthal and Morann did not share a common ancestor; possibly his aim was to create for the mythic past a parallel to the contemporary situation with its separate law-schools and unrelated legal families.

The genealogies also served the expectations of the poem's audience in a practical way. Family and kin were the basis of the early Irish social order, both legal and political.⁸ This kin-based social order is reflected both in the volume of genealogical writing preserved, and in the learned poets' preoccupation with lineage. It explains both the importance of the *fine*, 'corporate kin group', in early Irish law and the exploration of the family connections of major characters in the literature. The early Irish upper classes lived their lives in an atmosphere dominated by family connections and genealogy.

The third genealogy is by far the longest and runs to eight generations above Fíthal. The genealogy appears in the *Decision as to Cormac's Sword* and runs thus: Rudraige → Ailill Cestach → Senchaid → Fachtna → Socht → Sech → Glangen → Óengus → Fíthal. The plot and Fíthal's part in it are discussed in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.1). The context of the genealogy is a reference to Fíthal's son Socht as one of Cormac's hostages, and it plays an important part in establishing Socht's character and his relation to the other characters in the tale. Indeed, the inter-relationships between Socht, his father and Cormac motivate and permeate the entire story.

As for the genealogy itself, it may seem suspicious that the name Socht recurs in the fourth generation from Fíthal. However, naming a child after an ancestor is a common practice in many societies, ancient and modern, and certainly occurs in Irish pedigree-making. Otherwise, the genealogy is remarkable because of its slight correspondence with the second genealogy analysed in this section. The two genealogies agree solely on the fact that Fachtna was one of Fíthal's ancestors. In the genealogy in *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*, Fachtna was Fíthal's father and a judge himself, whereas in the genealogy under discussion here Fachtna is not identified by his profession and he is given as one of Fíthal's ancient ancestors, rather than a person of the more recent past.

This correspondence between the two genealogies certainly counts for something. However, it should not be construed to mean that the author of one was familiar with the other. What

⁸Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 328–365. See also, Rolf Baumgarten, 'Co Nómad n-Ó: An Early Irish Socio-legal Timescale', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17-18 (2003-4); T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Neil McLeod, 'Kinship', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 1–22.

this measure of agreement does suggest is that a connection between Fachtna and Fíthal was in existence before either of the two genealogies was constructed. The connection could have been made by reference to the Middle Irish list of authors of early Irish law in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*, since they both appear in that list.⁹

A few of these names appear to have a significant meaning in the mythology of early Ireland. The first, which heads the list of Fíthal's ancestors, was Rudraige, a name with powerful Ulster associations in the early genealogical collections.¹⁰ Rudraige was also the name of a High King of Ireland listed in the Book of Invasions, where he is termed a son of Partholón.¹¹ This poem's author seems to attribute Fíthal's nobility to his eminence in his profession, unlike the author of *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*. Nevertheless, he presumably had specific reasons for associating Fíthal with this particular character from Ireland's pre-historic past. The name Senchaid, which comes to mean an 'historian' or 'keeper of tradition', could refer to the one so named who was an adviser to Ailill, King of Connacht, in the Ulster-cycle. The genealogy also names Ailill Cestach, who recurs, along with such Ulster-cycle worthies as Cathbad the Druid, Fergus and 'Uislenn the father of Noíse', in the Lecan version of *Senchas Síl Ír*.¹² But the precise purpose of putting Senchaid and the obscure Ailill into Fíthal's genealogy is unclear to us. As for Sech, this name does not seem to be connected to any famous or infamous characters in early Irish literature.

The fourth genealogy appears in Fíthal's *Judgement in Favour of Cormac* (see Section 4.1.1). The lineage proceeds: Reth → Muiredach → Aongus → Fíthal. The appearance of the genealogy next to a *roscad* may have been intended to render the judgement more official or weighty. This sense of authority may have been needed because the *roscad* purported to give a legal mandate for the Uí Néill occupation of the Bregian plain in the Early Medieval period and to secure their claims there. In other words, there was a pragmatic need to give all possible authority to this particular *roscad*.

Comparing this to the previous genealogies, the only correspondence is between the name Aongus here and Óengus in *Decision as to Cormac's Sword*. In this case, as before, the correspondence does not seem to betoken any significant relationship. Rather, genealogy seems to have only a functional role of setting the scene for Fíthal's judgement and giving an aura of respectability to his pronouncement.

The fifth genealogy is an interesting study in how scribes can incorporate marginal notes

⁹John Carey, 'The Two Laws in Dubthach's Judgment', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 19 (1990), pp. 1–9.

¹⁰M. A. O'Brien, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976), pp. 270–271.

¹¹R. A. Stewart Macalister, ed., *Lebor Gabhála Éirenn: the Book of the Taking of Ireland*, vol. 5 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1940), pp. Part III 7, 125. For a critical examination of this text, see R. Mark Scowcroft, 'Leabhar Gabhála—Part I: The Growth of the Text', *Ériu* 38 (1987) and R. Mark Scowcroft, 'Leabhar Gabhála—Part II: The Growth of the Tradition', *Ériu* 39 (1988).

¹²M. A. O'Brien, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976), pp. 270–271.

into their text. As demonstrated by Sharon Arbuthnot, the genealogy of Fíthal which appears in a Scottish copy of the *Cóir Anmann* made by the Reverend John Beaton was originally a marginal note in Beaton's exemplar, written by Ádhamh Ó Cuirnín's.¹³ The genealogy itself is short but instructive: Fer Coícat (alternatively, Fachtna) → Fíthal.

As Arbuthnot points out, the entry containing Fíthal does not appear in any other known copy of *Cóir Anmann*, and she is able to confirm the suspicion that it is a scribal addition. For our purposes, Fíthal's and Fachtna's connection was well established in tradition and is not controversial. The only unique genealogical information presented in this lineage is the alternative name for Fachtna, i. e. Fer Coícat, and the fact that he had a brother named Cithruad (who recurs in the *fianaigecht*).

6.1.2 Reconciling the Differing Genealogies

It is a natural inclination for scholars of early Irish literature to attempt to create a whole out of the parts: versions and fragments of tales which confront us. Native Irish scholars have similarly attempted to make sense of contradictory accounts of the major characters of early Irish literature. In certain circumstances, they have done this by re-writing bits of the literature to suit their picture of how it was articulated. This is seen in the synchronisation of various texts in the early period;¹⁴ a later example is the harmonisation evident in the Annals of the Four Masters.¹⁵ However, attempting to reconstruct a postulated 'original pedigree' may not be the most effective method to explain the differing lineages of Fíthal.

The genealogy which is most easily eliminated from our enquiry is that which connects Fíthal to Finn. This is so for a variety of reasons already discussed (see Section 4.2.2). The other two are not so easy to ignore, since they are older than the *Duanaire Finn/Acallam na Senórach* genealogies and also since they have features in common. One shared feature is the character of Fachtna. In the younger of the two texts, *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*, Fachtna appears as the father of Fíthal; while in the earlier pedigree, Fachtna is Fíthal's great-great-great-grandfather. Both authors had a sense that Fachtna and Fíthal were connected, but the bare connection was all they shared. We have suggested that the link may go back to the Pseudo-Historical Prologue of the *Senchas Már*. Another possibility is that the name Fachtna should be connected to the mythical High King of Ireland, Fachtna Fáthach, who, in turn, is connected to Conchobar mac Nessa.¹⁶ As we have just seen (see Section 6.1.1), the obscure ancestor called Ailill Cestach

¹³Sharon Arbuthnot, 'Fíthal in *Cóir Anmann*', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 20 (2000), pp. 197–200. For a more detailed manuscript history of this text, see Sharon Arbuthnot, 'The Manuscript Tradition of *Cóir Anmann*', *Studia Celtica* 35 (2001), pp. 285–298.

¹⁴Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 233–255.

¹⁵K. Megan McGowan, 'The Four Masters and the Governance of Ireland in the Middle Ages', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 7–24.

¹⁶M. A. O'Brien, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies,

likewise has some Ulster – or Ulster-cycle – connotations. Possibly ‘Ulster’ or ‘Northern’ is the message about Fíthal’s origins which we are meant to read between the lines.

The two authors develop the character Fachtna in two ways. In the later lineage, Fachtna is given a father, Cáelchláen, who does not appear in the genealogy of Fachtna Fáthach, and in fact appears to be a mere make-weight character with a name that means ‘Thin-and-perverse’. In the earlier genealogy, Fachtna is given Senchaid as his father; he presents his own problems, which are examined shortly. Neither of these genealogies encourages us to assume that the Fachtna referred to was the mythical High King Fachtna Fáthach. Only a widely read reader or a person highly knowledgeable in antiquarian lore would have been alert to the possibility that Fachtna Fáthach was a forbear of Fíthal’s.

Another possible point of contact between the two genealogies is the name Sencha or Senchaid, if the two may be equated. This name is given to a character who appears in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and elsewhere in the Ulster-cycle, e. g. in *Fled Bricrenn*.¹⁷

These points of contact in the two genealogies could lead one to believe that they are connected at a deeper level. The author of the genealogy in *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* was most definitely a man who knew both the mythology surrounding the law and the law itself. It is possible that he knew of the story of Cormac’s sword and took advantage of that fact to construct his pedigree of Fíthal. If he did, however, this was not a slavish copy of the earlier pedigree, for it is considerably shorter and has a different dynastic founder. As indicated above, the connection may stem from the proximity of Fíthal and Fachtna in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue of the *Senchas Már*. The authors of the two genealogies may have come up with the connection independently, on the basis of their acquaintance with the Pseudo-Historical Prologue; but the two genealogies may reflect an intermediate work or works now lost.

In the case of *The Decision as to Cormac’s Sword*, the lineage presented by the author suggests a distinctive mix in the sources of his information. Rudraige comes from the world of genealogies and pseudo-history, as a dynastic founder and a mythical High King of Ireland. Ailill Cestach has no fixed abode in the literature, but has a certain name resonance with the Ulster-cycle, which is matched by other names in the pedigree, including, Sencha(id). Another way of taking Sencha(id), however, is as a generic name for an historian or other person with traditional knowledge. The use of eponymous ancestors and ancestors with embodying qualities associated with them is common in early Irish literature; on this reading, his inclusion in this list would suggest that the author was padding Fíthal’s lineage with appropriate-sounding fictitious persons at this point. The name Fachtna takes us back to the world of genealogies and the Book of Invasions, so it may be said to resonate with Rudraige. The name Socht (which means ‘silence’) could be a doublet of Fíthal’s son Socht, i. e. more padding. Sech does not recur in the

1976), pp. 189, 276, 281–282.

¹⁷George Henderson, ed., *Fled Bricrend* (London: Irish Texts Society, 1899).

literature; he might be a textual derivative of Sencha, i. e. a thinly disguised doublet and hence further evidence of padding. Glangen 'Pure-born' likewise does not recur in the literature, and sounds like a made-up name without substance. By contrast, the name Óengus is so common that it does not provide any analytic insight.

What seems to emerge from the above sequence of names is that the author of the genealogy may have recycled names which had a variety of associations in early Irish literature, in such a way that when a reader began to develop a sense of the provenance of the lineage, the author changed the field of reference before the reader could build up a firm expectation of where Fíthal's ancestry really lay. By moving between the literary and (pseudo-)historical frames of reference, the genealogy could bear a superficial semblance of veracity while not being firmly enough rooted in any one *milieu* to be challengeable.

The conclusions to be drawn from these three genealogies are not clear-cut, but they are instructive potentially as regards the treatment of other (semi-)mythical characters. They are certainly not meant to be taken literally. In the third genealogy, it seems that the author wanted to evoke a kind of reverence towards Fíthal and Socht, but without hooking them up to any known pedigree. In a sense, giving Fíthal a genealogy that did not fit into the accepted framework imparted an aura of mystery to him. On the one hand, there was a genealogy but, on the other, this genealogy, although it was stuffed with evocative-sounding names, thwarted any expectations it raised about Fíthal, and finally left his genealogy unattached. This mysterious aspect of Fíthal's character fits well with his status as a wisdom figure in early Irish literature. For many other characters besides Fíthal, each genealogy attached to them, when analysed carefully, may inform the modern scholar about the author's visions of the character in question. This clearly has implications for the literary analysis of the role of that character. A full analysis of the way in which genealogies are deployed within Irish literature might yield more in this regard.

It follows that any attempts by scholars to rationalise and harmonise the varying genealogies of characters who recur in early Irish literature are likely to be fruitless.¹⁸ Early Irish authors seem to have felt that a character's genealogy was adaptable in accordance with the author's pragmatic purposes within a given text. Thus, even the genealogies of major characters were not sacrosanct. In later Irish literature, while providing characters with genealogies continued to be fashionable, major re-editing of the texts tended to iron-out much of the seemingly casual variability in some genealogies from some earlier texts. Perhaps a focused analysis of this phenomenon may reveal more about the process and mechanisms involved.

¹⁸Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past: The Early Irish Genealogical Tradition', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 12 (1998). See also, T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946), pp. 266–269

6.2 Aspects of Fíthal's Character

The remainder of this chapter attempts to correlate the several aspect of Fíthal's character. This, of course, involves looking diachronically at a character who, as shown previously, assimilated the traits of several sub-groups within the early Irish 'mandarin class' over time. In this way, his character became more undifferentiated, while not losing his fundamental quality as a judge of traditional Irish law. The conclusions drawn in this section depend upon the analysis provided in earlier chapters.

It should be emphasised that the material discussed in the succeeding sections existed solely within the realm of literature. At this time, there is not enough evidence to prove or suggest that it had any correlation with the realities of early Irish history or law.¹⁹ While this disjunction is interesting and important in general terms, it is explored here only insofar as it sheds light on the development of the character of Fíthal. The following analysis refers only to literary aspects of early Irish culture.

6.2.1 Fíthal as Wisdom Figure

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, Fíthal is a quintessential wisdom figure and as such occupies a place which caters for one of the fundamental needs of a society. In this basic role, he brings order out of chaos through formulating rules and regulations for a socially cohesive group of people. He also embodies in his teaching an orderly, if not always safe, society. This aspect, of course, brought him up against the exercise of regulatory power by the king. The conflict is implicit in his poetic dialogue with Cormac mac Airt. In that poetic dialogue, Fíthal leans upon his traditional relationship with Cormac, threatening to leave him if he does not honour that relationship. Fíthal does this even though he is named as a hireling (*amus*) of Cormac. The confrontation presupposes that Fíthal's abandonment of Cormac would harm Cormac, so that it behoved Cormac to placate his indignant counsellor.

The international wisdom figures discussed in Chapter 3 have universal themes and perceptions about human nature to convey to their charges. By contrast, Fíthal has a narrow focus upon the law and the legal aspects of his native culture. Despite this restricted range of subject matter in the way in which Fíthal is presented as a teacher instructing a student, later identified as his son represents the primary function of almost every wisdom figure throughout history. There could be various reasons for this early specialisation of wisdom and for presenting Fíthal in this way. It would seem that unusually, Fíthal did not start out as a teacher of universal wisdom,

¹⁹See Nerys Patterson, 'Brehon Law in Late Medieval Ireland: "Antiquarian and Obsolete" or "Traditional and Functional"?', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 17 (1989); Nerys Patterson, 'Gaelic Law and the Tudor Conquest of Ireland: The Social Background of the Sixteenth-Century Recensions of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Irish Historical Studies* 27 (1991); Katharine Simms, 'Gaelic Military History and the Later Brehon Law Commentaries', in Cathal G. Ó Háinle and Donald E. Meek, eds., *Unity in Diversity: Studies in Irish and Scottish Gaelic Language, Literature and History* (Dublin: School of Irish, Trinity College, 2004).

but developed a broader remit through time, proceeding from specialisation to the universal. However, without more direct and clear evidence for the very earliest phases of Fíthal's existence as a wisdom figure, no final judgement can be ventured in regard to his wisdom trajectory.

Determining that trajectory is complicated by the question of the authorship of *Senbríathra Fíthail*. If it was composed by Flann Fína, and if Fíthal's authority as a wisdom figure was sufficiently powerful, those circumstances may have created the environment within which a redactor of the text felt that he could change its ascription. This would, of course, have been easier if the text that he was copying lacked a title or ascription. Changing or supplying a title in this way is in keeping with conditions which prevailed for the redactor of this text. First, the typical redactor was not a mere stenographer in the early Irish tradition, but an active force within it. Second, the redactor of this text would have known of Fíthal and regarded the text as suitable to attach to Fíthal. Third, at the time of the compilation of the Book of Leinster there could have been an anti-English bias; the Anglo-Norman invasion was in the air, and attaching the text to Fíthal could have constituted a nationalistic literary protest. If this were the case, it played its part in expanding the range of the wisdom attributed to Fíthal.

Although the details of the process remain obscure, Fíthal became a wisdom figure in the widest sense. In the texts we have examined Fíthal is shown in a variety of situations in which his special knowledge was available to those who asked for it. For instance, his attendance upon Cormac was forthcoming when the latter needed expert advice in regard to his dream (see Section 3.7); yet he gave this advice while maintaining his main function as judge and legal adviser to Cormac.

6.2.2 Fíthal as Literary Figure

If we may take a legal text as a work of literature, then our earliest literary reference to Fíthal is in the work named after him, *Finn̄sruth Fíthail*. This text establishes two literary facts: it introduces Fíthal as a judge and instructor in the wisdom figure style; and second, it associates him with the method of legal instruction envisioned by the author as normative for the mythical jurists of early Irish law. This text contains the prime constituents of Fíthal's later literary character. In nearly all later references to him, though not yet in *Finn̄sruth Fíthail*, one further basic ingredient is added: he is associated with the reign of Cormac mac Airt.

The conjunction with Cormac first becomes apparent in the poetic dialogue featuring Fíthal and Cormac, which dates to the Middle Irish period (ninth to twelfth century). As the *Finn̄sruth Fíthail* appears to be an Old Irish text, it must have been produced first and the poetic dialogue later. If we assume that Fíthal's connection with the *Finn̄sruth Fíthail* is genuinely early, then we can postulate an early stage in which, Fíthal was little noticed outside the legal community. This degree of compartmentalisation would have implications for our understanding of early Irish education, though this need not concern the present discussion. By the time the poetic

dialogue was produced, Fíthal had come to the attention of the *literati* more generally and the connection between Fíthal and Cormac gelled – perhaps simultaneously – in the minds of the early Irish scholastic community. From this moment, at the latest, Fíthal became a literary character. Interestingly, the poetic dialogue in its oldest form appears without a prologue or explanatory material of any sort, even though there is no explanation in the dialogue itself of the position of Fíthal in relation to Cormac. Presumably, some knowledge of Fíthal, outside the legal community, was assumed by the scribe of the Book of Leinster. In any event, the poetic dialogue brought Fíthal to a wider audience and gave him a new locus, in which juristic eminence was expanded into a wisdom role, but the wisdom was delimited by Fíthal's co-existence with Cormac, the paradigmatic wise king.

After the writing of the poetic dialogue and the establishment of Fíthal as a judge, authors deployed him for a variety of purposes. In the Fenian tradition, he was used to restore order when the heroes of the story had broken the law. Dramatically, he allowed the author to extricate the Fenian heroes from legal impasses, so as to move the plot forward or to conclude the story. Elsewhere, he was used variously: to explain the mysteries of dreams, to write down history and law, to instruct his son on choosing a wife, or to tell his son four actions not to take. Colin Ireland has stated that these literary functions outside the Fenian tradition are passive in comparison with the more active roles of other characters in the same stories.²⁰ While this is true, it must be remembered that it is not the role of a wisdom figure to take action. The wisdom figure's role is to pass on wisdom to others, who then act (or do not act) on his advice, in accordance with the needs of the plot of the story in which he appears. Thus, it is not Fíthal's function to take the initiative, except as an enabling figure, who helps the main character to achieve his goals. The most instructive tale from this point of view is the *Decision as to Cormac's Sword*, where Fíthal is an accomplice to Socht's plan to regain his father's sword. While the plot of this narrative raises other considerations, such as conflict of interest, we can see that in strategic terms Fíthal fulfilled roles both as a character – as Socht's father – and as a wisdom figure who helps the plot to move toward its conclusion by advising the main character as to what course to take. Other more 'active' roles for Fíthal were shown in connection with the story of the loss of Cormac's eye, detailed in chapters 3 and 4 (see Sections 3.2 and 4.1.1). These complement the more passive roles played by Fíthal in some other texts where he is more of a cipher.

A few of the references to Fíthal speak obliquely about his role in the court of Cormac. The focus of most of these references is on Cormac's role as the High King of Ireland during the golden age of his reign. For instance, in *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire* Fíthal is mentioned just once, and this is in reference to his role as Cormac's helper in establishing good rule in Ireland. The reference has more significance for Cormac's role as an ideal king than for Fíthal's role as

²⁰Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), p. 48.

a wisdom figure. These references use Fíthal's authority as judge and jurist to certify Cormac's role as king and wisdom figure. It seems that in these circumstances Cormac himself is not thought of as the author of these texts, but he clearly supplies a favourable context within which wisdom figures like Fíthal can do their work. Typically, they act in conjunction with the nobles of Ireland to determine of what the law and other traditional subjects should consist.

All of these references testify to an essential vision of Fíthal developed by the authors of the later period. His character, once created, was adapted over time from the important but humble jurist and wisdom figure of the early legal tradition to the judge of the High King Cormac mac Airt. From that point onward Fíthal would remain an important but elusive figure, in the background of the action whenever Cormac mac Airt appeared in a story. This vision of Fíthal is remarkably stable over time. Only three major modifications of the character of Fíthal were introduced over the centuries. First, *Acallam na Senórach* and the *Dunanaire Finn* revision added a little to Fíthal's character, while linking him with Finn and a druidess. Second, the story by Keating about Fíthal's deathbed advice to his son casts Fíthal as a generic wisdom figure, blurring the more specialised juristic aspect of his wisdom. Third, it looks as though Fíthal had changed from a judge to a poet in the source of MacPherson's Ossianic reference to him.

6.2.3 Fíthal as Judge

By any standard, Fíthal was one of the preeminent judges in the mythology of early Irish law. According to tradition, he personally compiled one of the more important law tracts, *Aí Ennach*, which promulgated the rules of procedure within the early Irish court system as understood by the historic early Irish jurists. Unfortunately for modern scholars, only two fragments of this potentially valuable legal explanation of procedure survive today, and their contents and relation to actual procedure are largely unknown. The other text that directly concerns Fíthal was a text purportedly dictated by him to his son, i. e. *Finn'sruth Fíthail*. While the wisdom aspects of this text have already been discussed (see Section 3.9), the *Finn'sruth Fíthail* itself is a legal text concerned wholly with legal topics whose interest and challenges lie within the domain of students of the law. Scholars are fortunate that parts of the text of *Finn'sruth Fíthail* have survived the ravages of time. Hopefully, a new and fuller edition of the text will be forthcoming in the future to solve the textual problems and supply a modern commentary upon the text. Hopefully, this in its turn will help illuminate Fíthal's role in the legal mythology.

Two texts provided complementary testimony to Fíthal's role as a judge and jurist. The first, *Aí Ennach*, presents Fíthal as the tradition-bearer and codifier of early Irish law. The second, *Finn'sruth Fíthail*, commemorates an act of wisdom and education but is primarily concerned with the interpretation of early Irish law. We may justly envision him as a preeminent early Irish jurist and theoretician of early Irish law. We have texts attributed to, and recorded sayings of Fíthal, yet there is still a large gap between the legal figure and his literary manifestations. Early

Irish legal texts tend, with only a few exceptions,²¹ to be tightly constrained texts which explain the law and precious little else.

In the literary references to Fíthal, we have seen how he plays the role of judge to High King Cormac mac Airt during the golden age of Cormac's rule. In this capacity, he sometimes uses his legal expertise to make peace when disputes arise in the contexts within which he appears. This shows Fíthal as a peace maker. He is not beyond a bit of duplicity in his dealings but he always seems to have the interests of peace at heart. As indicated above, the nature of early Irish law may have played a part in shaping this aspect of Fíthal. According to Robin Stacey, one of the goals of early Irish law was to maintain correct and harmonious social relations.²² This was a difficult task, since disputes as envisioned by early Irish law and its jurists were resolved by hiring a judge to settle the dispute.²³ Viewed in this light, judges were hired arbitrators who could not enjoin disputants to settle by reference to a more powerful third party. Even if the judge had been hired by the disputants, there was no way for the judge to enforce his judgement. The law envisions that the judge who was hired would have to place a valuable possession in jeopardy, over and above his payment. This was supposed to pressurise him to come to the correct legal conclusion; but this might not stop a disgruntled party in a dispute from attempting to enforce his own judgement perforce. These circumstances could cause judges to pursue a policy of appeasement or to attempt to find middle ground, so that both parties to a conflict could feel that they had been heard and had obtained satisfaction from the proceedings. In an earlier formulation of the law, the powerful third party could have been a magico-religious figure.²⁴ For instance, a few of the law tracts have the names of mythological figures or pre-Christian deities attached to them (e.g. *Bretha Déin Chécht*). While this may have been the case, the way in which Fíthal is presented in his role as judge in the literature is as a peace-maker, attempting to occupy a middle ground and promote conciliation. But whether this view of a judge had any applicability outside the literary context is still extremely unclear.

While there is a dearth of evidence with which to fill in the details, a general outline of Fíthal as a judge emerges from this discussion of the factors which help define him. Conceivably, further aspects of Fíthal's contribution to early Irish law will become clear through more detailed understanding of the texts which surround him, especially *Finn'sruth Fíthail*. The hints of his role as a peacemaker could contribute to debate about the actual role of jurists in early Irish society.

²¹Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 370–372.

²²Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Law and Order in the Very Old West: England and Ireland in the Early Middle Ages', in Benjamin T. Hudson and Vickie Ziegler, eds., *Crossed Paths: Methodological Approaches to the Celtic Aspect of the European Middle Ages* (London: University Press of America, 1991).

²³Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 53.

²⁴Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 43–48.

6.2.4 Fíthal Compared to Other Mythological Figures

There are few other mythological wisdom figures in the early Irish tradition to compare with Fíthal. The most obvious comparison is with the famous early Irish judge, Morann. In fact, when James MacPherson paired the two characters in his *Temora*, he was asserting a tie that might have occurred to anyone with knowledge of early Irish literature. However, two other characters also show points of comparison: Fintan, who appears beside Fíthal on two occasions; and Sencha, the page adviser to Conchobar, King of Ulster, in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

Morann, who is also described as a judge of early Irish law, is most famous for his *audacht* 'bequest' in which he instructs a young king on kingship from his deathbed.²⁵ In another text about him, he has a special collar which tightens when he speaks a false judgement and loosens when he speaks a true judgement.²⁶ He also appears in several sections of *Bretha Nemed Dédenach* and *Bretha Nemed Toísech*, in which he gives legal instruction to his pupil Neire.²⁷

These texts show Morann as a comparable figure when placed alongside Fíthal. They both appear in a teacher/student relation with an interlocutor. They both have stories which place them in relation to mythological personages. They both appear in late sources, namely Geoffrey Keating and James MacPherson, albeit in forms which distance them from their traditional roles. Given their points of similarity, one might be tempted to analyse the two figures as reflections of one prototypical mythological Irish judge. Certainly, the similarity of the two characters is suggestive. Additionally, both characters often play a supporting role to another, more active characters in the tales which mention them. This supports the idea that there may have been a view among the authors of early Irish literature that judges were 'bit players' to be deployed to support and expedite the actions of the main characters. However, a more extensive study of the ways in which the legal world was portrayed in the literature of early Ireland would need to be completed before any more could be deduced from this idea.

Morann and Fíthal are the only two judges who have more than a fleeting presence in early Irish literature. As to their status, they are literary depictions of judges or, perhaps, manifestations of the law in early Irish literature. At this level, judges are first and foremost wise men, knowledgeable jurists, and peacemakers. If Robin Stacey's theory of early Irish law as a reflection of the need for social harmony and orderly social relations is correct, this could be a literary expression of this position.²⁸ However, co-ordinating legal, literary and

²⁵See Fergus Kelly, *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976). For commentary, see also P. L. Henry, 'The Cruces of Audacht Morainn', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 39 (1982).

²⁶Whitley Stokes, 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', in *Irish Texts*, vol. 3, no. 1, ed. by Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1891), 189–191, 206–209.

²⁷Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), p. 366.

²⁸Robin Chapman Stacey, 'Law and Order in the Very Old West: England and Ireland in the Early Middle Ages', in Benjamin T. Hudson and Vickie Ziegler, eds., *Crossed Paths: Methodological Approaches to the Celtic Aspect of*

historical information available for early Irish society, while interesting in theory is not a practical proposition. Finally, when James MacPherson made an association between Fíthal and Morann, he may, unwittingly, have been onto something; these two characters seem to mirror each other in some ways in the literature.

Comparing Fíthal with Fintan is less productive than comparing him with Morann. Both Fíthal and Fintan appear together only once, in the context of the writing of the *Saltair Cormaic*. Fintan is a better-known character than Fíthal and appears in various stories, especially as a symbol for the continuity of Irish tradition, since he was supposed to have lived from before the Biblical Flood until the conversion to Christianity.²⁹ Fintan was not a wise man as such, merely a long-lived one. However, it seems from the story which introduces Fíthal and Fintan together that he was well acquainted with Irish law as well as Irish history. This story is also the one in which Fíthal added historical knowledge to his portfolio. It is interesting to speculate that Fíthal and Fintan may have been brought together thus for the purpose of giving Fíthal this attribute. For in essence, Fintan taught Fíthal about Irish history.

The last character to merit examination beside Fíthal in an analytical or comparative sense is Conchobar's adviser, Sencha.³⁰ This comparison is also less productive than the one with Morann, but it usefully highlights Fíthal's role as a peacemaker, and his eloquence. One of Fíthal's descriptive epithets is *féigbriathrach*, 'keen-worded', which duly emphasises Fíthal's power with words. The other relevant aspect of Fíthal is the fact that he pacifies hosts. Sencha demonstrates both qualities. But while Fíthal's authority is based on knowledge of the law, Sencha's seems to stem from his skill at analysing social and personal issues and steering people to practical solutions. While eloquence in a general sense is an integral part of the wisdom figure's image, the ways in which the two characters use words do not bear close comparison. Legal eloquence is very different from other forms of eloquence. However, there is one point of correspondence: the public performance of a man of letters declaiming and the public performance of a judge giving judgement. In both cases eloquence, in the sense of speaking well, would be expected as part of the performance, and would help to bring about a stage of order in society, whether the existing disorder took the form of a personality clash or a legal issue.

This functional relationship may point to a reason for Fíthal's accumulation of different traits. The connection of eloquence with peace and peacemakers is a common theme in early Irish literature (see, for example, Fergus Truelips in Section 3.4). It is not the warriors who make fine speeches, but those who counsel against violence. While eloquence does not stop violence

the European Middle Ages (London: University Press of America, 1991).

²⁹Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 4–7.

³⁰Kaarina Hollo, 'The Ulster Cycle, the Law-tracts, and the Medieval Court: The Depiction of Senchae mac Ailella, *Aurlabraid Ulad*', *Aiste* 1 (2007).

from occurring in early Irish literature, the power to advise peace and harmony is a prized attribute. We may also cite the story of how the poets abused their verbal powers in a court case and lost their privilege of keeping the laws of Ireland (see Section 3.8). While this story may be a retrospective explanation of why poets were not also judges of Irish law, it highlights the main point of contact of poets and judges, namely speech. In the speech act, both judge and poet fulfil their prime function differing only in their modes of communication. Although the earliest texts show *Fíthal* only as a legal figure, his reliance on verbal, public skills to deliver judgements meant that he shared a great deal with the poet. If current thinking on the subject is correct, the education of lawyers, especially in the early medieval period, was essentially what could be considered, in modern terminology, ‘interdisciplinary’; those who were studying the law were also studying poetic composition.³¹ So while the dialogue between Cormac and *Fíthal* has meaning at a literal and at a mytho-poetic level, it also casually exemplifies a truth about the cultural set-up in early Irish literature and life: both king and judge use verse when matters of importance are required to be said.

No literary character lives in a vacuum. While *Fíthal*’s historical background lies in an international wisdom-figure context (see Chapter 2), comparing and contrasting him with certain other figures in early Irish literature is a productive activity. In this, *Fíthal*’s similarity to Morann is the most striking. As we have seen, they share traits in both legal and literary contexts. Both were law-givers and both were literary-mythical personalities, and their traits and attributes were effectively the same. *Fíthal*’s other characteristics built up through a slow aggregation of traits assigned to him by early Irish authors who seemed to want to make those wise and learned custodians of tradition look increasingly homogeneous, and simultaneously more like either themselves or an idealised version of themselves. The connections explored in this section help to reveal this tendency in early Irish authors.

6.3 *Fíthal in a Theoretical Context*

The foundation is now present for a discussion of the differing theoretical frameworks which may help to explain the character of *Fíthal* in a broader sense. This particular discussion was deferred until all the relevant pieces of information could be collected, arranged, and described. On this basis we may hope to approach the fundamental question of what the significance of *Fíthal* in the early Irish tradition may be, beyond his particular manifestations in the literature.

Within early Irish studies, there are two main explanatory models: the ‘nativist’ and the ‘Eurocentrist’. As was briefly examined in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.2), these two groups grew out of the sense that early Irish literature had connections deeper and wider than might initially

³¹Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 189–195.

appear. The earlier of the two approaches, the ‘nativist’, attempted to identify a symbological structure which could be explained in terms of an Indo-European heritage. The second approach grew out of a sense that the literature was rooted in a common European Latin culture of the Middle Ages.

A caveat is necessary here before continuing. As explained in the introduction, we take no particular theoretical position. Each of the two models to be presented has insights to commend it and contains a measure of ‘truth’. As a consequence, we shall proceed by incorporating those portions of each theory which most readily explain the issue under discussion. The resulting picture is ours, and we should not be labelled as a proponent of one theory over the other.

6.3.1 Ireland’s Indo-European Heritage

Before examining the nativists’ theoretical position in detail, it is useful to explain the superstructure which forms a critical part of their point of view. Whatever the total linguistic make-up may have been in early Ireland of the fifth to ninth century, the literary language of the island was Old Irish, which derives from an unrepresented Insular-Celtic stage of language, which gives rise also to Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Manx, and Scots Gaelic.³² Further back, it shares a common ancestor with Gaulish, termed Proto-Celtic. Proto-Celtic shares with almost all the European languages a common ancestor called Proto-Indo-European. In recent linguistic research using computer technology, Old Irish has tentatively been identified as the language close to Proto-Indo-European in character and word usage.³³

In the early twentieth century, nativists argued that the densely symbol-rich quality of early Irish literature was due to its essentially pre-Christian nature. This view was combined with the linguistic research of the time to construct the argument that the early Irish preserved a consummately conservative culture which naturally resisted change in any form. The postulated conservatism of early Irish literature was used to argue that any Christian symbolism contained in it was a light coating over the substantial (and more interesting) pre-Christian strata of literary remains.

A major breakthrough came about through the dissemination of the theories of Georges Dumézil, who argued that for there to be a language, there must also be a culture.³⁴ This basic premise became an axiom that determined the direction of his later thoughts on the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European religion, which he sought to recover from the mythology of those cultures which gave rise to Indo-European languages. Another basic premise which is apparent in this argument and became axiomatic in Dumézil’s thought is that religion is

³²Kim McCone, *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader: Including an Introduction to Middle Irish* (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005), pp. 1–4.

³³R. L. Trask, *Historical Linguistics* (London: Arnold, 1996), pp. 361–370.

³⁴C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966), p. 131.

inherently conservative. The significance of this is that it allows one to postulate that there should be traces of the original religious thought-world, sufficiently coherent for reconstruction to be possible in the extant religious and non-religious texts of pre-Christian Europe. Working with these two axioms, Dumézil studied the literatures of the early historical cultures of Europe in an attempt to reconstruct the mytho-religious thought-world of the Proto-Indo-Europeans. The most famous result of these researches is the tripartite theory of Indo-European culture.³⁵

The tripartite theory postulates that there were three social groups, known as functions, in Indo-European society. The first function comprised the guardians of the religious mysteries and encompassed all cognitive activity. The second function comprised the warriors or vitally active ones. The third function encompassed fecundity and also included food producers. These three functions were reflected in the gods and goddesses (reserved for special consideration below) of the pagan cultures of Europe, Iran, and India.

After Dumézil postulated (or recognised) the tri-partite nature of Indo-European society, a few problems arose. At first, he placed goddesses entirely within the third function, which restricted the places in which they could appear in resultant cultures. However, other scholars began to find goddesses in more varied roles than the theory allowed. This caused Dumézil to re-evaluate the position of goddesses in the tripartite scheme. He finally decided that they did not fit in any one function but were trans-functional. For example, Athena burst from Zeus' head, fully formed and was dressed in full warrior's equipment. In a myth about the founding of Athens, Athena planted an olive tree there during a contest with Poseidon to determine who should be the patron deity of Athens. These accounts show Athena representing all three functions. An additional problem concerned the position of kings within the tripartite structure. Early in the evolution of Dumézil's theory, kings occupied the first function role as religious figures, the men between Heaven and Earth. However, numerous examples of mythical kings performing second and third function activities in addition to their first function role were pointed out. Again, a compromise was made: kings were recast as trans-functional figures.³⁶

As with kings and goddesses, Dumézil continually changed and revised other details of his theory as his thinking progressed. His books exist in multiple editions, and one has to have the latest editions in order to understand the theory as it stood at the end of his life. This continual revisionist activity was partly a response to other scholars, who saw that this theory could be of value in their own work, and who expanded and developed it further. This process in its turn has helped the properly linguistic term Proto-Indo-European be extended to the study of Indo-European culture.

As indicated, the tripartite theory has had its critics, and has not been given serious consid-

³⁵C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 99–139.

³⁶Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), pp. 217–227.

eration by disciplines such as Ancient History, the Classics, and Scandinavian Studies. John Brough mounted a major challenge to the theory when he claimed that the number three was so universal a motif that a specifically Indo-European tripartite ideology was incapable of being proved or disproved. He used the Biblical references to support his claims.³⁷ This attack was taken by the Dumézilians as inconclusive and did not deter them from their theorising.³⁸ Other serious challenges to the theory have been or could yet be mounted, but the silence on the part of other disciplines in regard to this theory suggests a degree of scepticism on the part of some scholars. Recently, it may be added, some scholars have criticised Dumézil, not for his scholarship but for his alleged ultra-right-wing politics.³⁹

This has not stopped other theorists from expanding on the tripartite theory. A fourth function, which focuses on an ‘Otherness’, has been proposed.⁴⁰ An Indo-European calendrical system has been worked out, under the heading of traditional cosmology.⁴¹ The idea of taking the *Männerbund* as an age-graded division within the tripartite ideology has also been proposed.⁴² Other scholars have added a refinement to the theory by stating that the third function was subordinate to the other two.⁴³

The foregoing summary does not do full justice to the breadth of study and the linguistic reach of the scholars who are involved in the continuation of Dumézil’s theory. Ireland is not particularly prominent in their discussions of the reconstruction of the Indo-European thought-world. Celtic evidence was considered by Dumézil in his early research. In the Gaulish record, he was able to identify a set of gods to fit his system, but he felt that the Irish evidence was unhelpful.⁴⁴ Subsequent research and the publication of fuller information regarding early Irish literature has firmed the Celtic contribution to the tripartite theory. However, the Irish evidence still contains problems for Dumézilian scholars who seek to interpret it.⁴⁵

To return to the ‘nativist’ stance in early Irish scholarship, while there are difficulties in interpreting the Irish evidence in this light ‘nativists’ tend to utilise the tripartite theory of

³⁷ John Brough, ‘The Tripartite Ideology of the Indo-Europeans: an Experiment in Method’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 22 (1959).

³⁸ C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 188–191.

³⁹ Bruce Lincoln, ‘Rewriting the German War God: Georges Dumézil, Politics, and Scholarship in the Late 1930s’, *History of Religions* 37:3 (Feb. 1998).

⁴⁰ N. J. Allen, ‘Romulus and the Fourth Function’, in Edgar C. Polomé, ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996).

⁴¹ Emily Lyle, *Archaic Cosmos: Polarity, Space, and Time* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990).

⁴² Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990), pp. 205–214.

⁴³ Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil’s “Idéologie Tripartite”* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), pp. 177–197.

⁴⁴ William Sayers, ‘Tripartition in Early Ireland: Cosmic or Social Structure?’, in Edgar C. Polomé, ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 156–157.

⁴⁵ Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil’s “Idéologie Tripartite”* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), p. 50.

Dumézil as a justification for considering early Irish literature as a manifestation of the Indo-European thought-world, and viewing the Christian influence as a thin overlay on top of a bedrock of pre-Christian symbolism. Outside the realm of literature, evidence has been adduced from early Irish law to demonstrate the strict conservatism of the early Irish jurists in the face of the changes that the adoption of Christianity brought to the island.⁴⁶

6.3.2 Ireland's European Connection

While the 'nativist' conception of early Irish literature was in vogue from the turn of the twentieth century until the mid-twentieth century, an alternative view of early Irish literature was also beginning to develop. On this view, developments in continental Europe and connections brought by Christianity to Ireland were the major sources of influence; in short, this was a 'Eurocentrist' point of view. James Carney, surveying the analogues for motifs found in early Irish literature theorised a recent or contemporary continental European origin for these motifs.⁴⁷ He did not accept the 'nativist' view of the archaic nature of early Irish literature.⁴⁸ The 'nativist' conception, however, remained as the leading interpretative framework for the study of early Irish literature, despite Carney's strictures.

Eventually, it was early Irish law that gave rise to the development of fresh thinking about early Irish literature. The 'Eurocentric' model was given a fresh impetus by the seminal article, 'The Laws of the Irish', in which Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, and Aidan Breen demonstrated that the supposedly conservative early Irish jurists had translated entire sentences of Latin into Old Irish and embedded them in centrally important law tracts.⁴⁹ This identification of Christian ideas in the allegedly archaic law tracts gave incontrovertible evidence for the European connection to Irish culture. Subsequent research has shown more importations and influences of Canon Law in early Irish law.⁵⁰ For instance, the law tract *Bretha im Gatta* shows strong biblical influence, especially from the Old Testament.⁵¹

While a comprehensive account has not yet been enunciated, it is clear that this dimension was seriously underplayed by the 'nativists'. A brief outline of the 'Eurocentric' train of thought underlines this fact. The discovery of strong Christian influences on native law and literature

⁴⁶D. A. Binchy, 'Linguistic and Legal Archaisms in the Celtic Law Books', *The Transactions of the Philological Society* (1959).

⁴⁷James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955), pp. 276–323.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 1–65.

⁴⁹Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, 'The Laws of the Irish', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

⁵⁰Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Synodus II Patricii and Vernacular Law', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 16 (2002); Liam Breatnach, 'The Ecclesiastical Element in the Old-Irish Legal Tract *Cáin Fhuithirbe*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986); Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984).

⁵¹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 147–149.

in Ireland points to a considerable flow of information into Ireland from continental Europe. Given the fact that Irish scholars were sent to the Continent to study the new religion and returned home with the fruits of Latin Christendom, such influence was unsurprising, indeed unavoidable.⁵² Another factor to be considered is the fact that the skill of writing was only available in the churches and monasteries in medieval Ireland, as indeed was the case across Europe. The production of manuscripts and literary artefacts in Ireland was thus subject to the filter of Christian interpretation, and open to influence or change in accordance with Christian ideology.

The 'nativist' interpretation did not expressly deny the existence of Christian interpretation, of course, but it certainly tended to minimise its impact upon the literature. In the 'Eurocentric' model, on the other hand, the Christian influence is pervasive and subtle. On this view, the dense symbological structure of early Irish literature was a direct reflection of the Christian world-view. The gods and heroes of the past had been recycled to answer the needs of the newly converted. This 'recycling' activity was the conscious policy of the Roman church in the Middle Ages. It allowed for the faster spread of Christianity on the fringes of the Roman Empire because it allowed converts to feel more comfortable with their conversion.⁵³ In the implementation of this conversion strategy in Europe, Irish churchmen played a full part, and it would be odd if they had not applied the same teachings in their own country, before using them in other parts of Europe, in missions into the European hinterland. As it happened, the policy itself had mixed results, for paganism remained a stubborn problem that required the use of force to eradicate it. For instance, Charlemagne's systematic forced conversions of the Saxons illustrates the continuing influence of paganism in the face of Church policy.⁵⁴ Even in Ireland, all the indications are that full conversion took over a century to complete.⁵⁵ Such a prolonged period of ideological imperialism and resistance is by no means incompatible with the emergence of early Irish literature as we find it, and as explained by the 'Eurocentrist' model.

The 'Eurocentric' model ultimately seeks to align Ireland with the rest of Europe by identifying changes that were happening on the continent as the cause of similar changes in Ireland. One may make the observation at this point that that was also the goal of the synchronists of medieval Ireland, when they constructed an artificial history to bring Ireland's distant past into

⁵²Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 171–181.

⁵³For Pope Gregory's change in conversion policy among the English, see Jeffery Richards, *Consul of God: the Life and Times of Gregory the Great* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 245–250 and R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 177–187.

⁵⁴Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200–1000*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp. 6, 267–268, 290.

⁵⁵T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 182–202. See also Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995), pp. 14–40.

line with the known history of the ancient world.⁵⁶ While those modern scholars who present evidence in terms of the ‘Eurocentric’ model use careful textual and argumentative techniques to achieve their goals, the early Irish synchronists were not so constrained. But the synchronists’ aim of ‘europeanising’ prehistoric Ireland is easier to understand if it emanated from minds that experience the present, and envisioned the more recent past, in similar ways.

Ireland’s connection to the rest of Europe is not in doubt. When seen from a Mediterranean perspective, Ireland looks as if it is on the fringes of Europe. However, archaeological evidence demonstrates that Ireland has always been connected to Europe through trade. These connections, dating back to the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, would not have been terminated by a change in societal structure or religion. In the ‘Eurocentric’ model, the connections between Ireland and the rest of Europe were a driving force for societal change in early Ireland, in the early Middle Ages no less than previously and in subsequent times.

6.3.3 Other Theoretical Positions

While the ‘nativist’ and the ‘Eurocentric’ models of early Ireland have dominated the scholarly landscape within the discipline for much of the twentieth century, there have been other, less well-known theories about the origins and function of early Irish literature. Many of these are not worth scholarly attention, but there are two, associated with well-known scholars, which have merit and are worth discussing in the present context. One was proposed by the French scholar, M.-L. Sjoestedt,⁵⁷ and the other by H. R. Ellis Davidson.⁵⁸

The theory of early Irish mythology set out by Sjoestedt was founded on the continual insistence of the authors of the myths upon the skills of the Tuatha Dé Danann.⁵⁹ The major characters in the founding myths of Ireland are all associated, not with natural phenomena but with various skills which are specific to each. What made them gods was not, strictly, a form of supernatural activity but the fact that they were supernaturally endowed in a certain skill or skills. Sjoestedt’s theory did not deny that Ireland had an Indo-European linguistic inheritance, but attempted to discern the principles of prehistoric Irish mythology by working back from such texts as *Cath Maige Tuired* rather than starting from the reconstructions of Indo-European or universal theories of religion.

This theory of early Irish myth did not seem to gain support at the time of publication (Paris, 1940) though the enthusiastic support of Irish Indo-Europeanist Myles Dillon led to an English translation appearing (London, 1949). At that time, the late Victorian grand theories of mythology were still influential – e. g. ‘king as sacrifice’ theory, as proposed by James Frazer

⁵⁶For a concrete example, see the Irish World Chronicle, Molly Miller, ‘The Chronological Structure of the Sixth Age in the Rawlinson Fragment of the “Irish World-Chronicle”’, *Celtica* 22 (1991).

⁵⁷M.-L. Sjoestedt, *Gods and Heroes of the Celts*, ed. M. Dillon (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994).

⁵⁸Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁵⁹M.-L. Sjoestedt, *Gods and Heroes of the Celts*, ed. M. Dillon (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994).

in *The Golden Bough*, was still prevalent in popular and even scholarly discourse.⁶⁰ After its initial proposal, Sjoestedt's theory of the Irish gods was not expanded upon by other scholars, but her recognition that the focus of early Irish myths about gods emphasised the supernatural skill level of the main protagonists is important and deserves to be remembered.

The theory of H. R. Ellis Davidson is based on a painstaking study of Celtic and Germanic material.⁶¹ She determines that in these cultures there was a common superstructure of heavenly gods who were mediated through the person of the king. This involved a ritual year with feasts in honour of the gods, in which the king played a pivotal role. The former presence of those gods is echoed by dispersed traditions of land spirits and local deities having a relationship with the Otherworld.⁶² The explanatory power of this theory is rather limited, which could be a reason for its limited adoption in the scholarly literature. It is mentioned here because it offers an explanatory framework for Irish mythology that is reconstructed on historical-comparative principles, but with a relatively localised Celtic-Germanic starting-point.

In keeping with the general tone of Davidson's theory, she downplays the importance of the known Indo-European deity names. These reconstructions do indeed connect the Indo-Europeans and their descendants, but Davidson downplays this fact to focus on the intermediate Celto-Germanic stage. The explanation for this emphasis is her recognition that the inherited gods of the Indo-Europeans may have lived on in name only, while their personalities and functions changed over time to meet the needs of the people who worshipped them.⁶³

6.3.4 Discussion of Theoretical Positions

The differing theoretical positions described above attempt to understand and explain the semiotics and symbology of early Irish literature. The 'nativists' seem to believe that this literature reflects the autochthonous theology and mythopoeia of the early Irish, handed down in recognisable form from the pre-Christian past and carried forward into the Christian era by a conservative class of professional *literati*. The 'Eurocentrists' seem to believe that the pre-Christian past became inaccessible because of the massive and systemic changes in early Irish society brought by the introduction of Christianity. According to this view, these changes entailed an irreversible recasting of vernacular literature and the importation of a strong Christian filter. One contributory cause of this may have been the Roman church's policy of appropriating elements of a pagan system to ease the conversion of pagan peoples. Other accounts of the status of early Irish literature tend to assume a greater or lesser degree of continuity for pre-Christian ideas within the Christianised culture of early medieval Ireland.

⁶⁰James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: a Study in Comparative Religion* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890).

⁶¹Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1–10.

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 142–143.

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 152–155.

Ultimately, the ‘nativist’ and ‘Eurocentric’ theories disagree over the level of survival of pre-Christian thought and the degree of impact of that thought upon the Christian monks who wrote the bulk of early Irish literature. While evidence for both survival and replacement can be adduced by modern scholars, determining the importance of pre-Christian survivals within the literature of early medieval Ireland is a matter of personal judgement and, to some extent, of scholarly temperament. The polarised arguments of ‘nativists’ and their opponents have settled down recently. Fresh evidence can still be brought into play and, in our opinion, this will tend to create scholarly consensus. As things are, however, both ‘nativist’ and ‘Eurocentric’ positions have serious weaknesses that need to be discussed before we can turn to a discussion at the theoretical level of how *Fíthal* fits.

H. R. Ellis Davidson does not take issue with the ‘nativist’ position as such, but she does find fault with Dumézil’s version of it. Because her theory foregrounds Germanic and Celtic sources, she is less concerned with Indo-European connections. Her main argument concerns the shifting functions of individual gods. For instance, in regard to Odin and Thor, while Odin was undeniably a god of kings, he also presents some of the aspects of the warrior. Thor, on the other hand, who as the guardian of Asgard was predominantly affiliated with warriors, was also the protector of law and order. These two gods mix Dumézil’s first and second functions in an inextricable way.⁶⁴

Ellis Davidson’s critique highlights the uncertainties of linguistic reconstruction when one attempts to move from form to meaning in a metaphorically charged word-field.⁶⁵ Whereas phonological and morphological prehistory can be reconstructed to a certain degree, when this type of analysis is attempted in a religious context, in both theory and practice, the semantic range of words shifts in less predictable ways; and etymologically based reconstruction in a religious context is not as valuable an activity as it may seem at first.⁶⁶ Additionally, philological analysis of the etymology of gods’ names is constrained by the high degree of variability in the functions of individual gods in different locations. One of the two axioms of Dumézil’s theory is the inherently conservative nature of religion. But this purported axiom assumes a degree of institutionalisation in early peoples that may be a modern fiction. Moreover, such interpretations of the soul of early gods are likely to trivialise the emotional and metaphorical nature of religion when attempting to reconstruct the religious life of early peoples and their relationship with their deities.

Another approach which runs into similar difficulties is that which ‘explains’ religion purely in terms of control and power. This is implicit in ‘nativist’ accounts which draw on the theories of Dumézil who drew early inspiration, as he himself acknowledges, from the work of Emile Durkheim. One of the tenets of Durkheim, which has become an unremarked axiom of the

⁶⁴Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 153–155.

⁶⁵R. L. Trask, *Historical Linguistics* (London: Arnold, 1996), pp. 228–231.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 345–350.

social sciences today, was that religion is a system of symbols which correlates to the use of power in the secular world.⁶⁷ In essence, according to Durkheim, religion had no connection with any supernatural world and operated only within the emotional and superstitious world of man. He explicitly denied the ability of a priest of a religion to believe in supernatural aspects of that religion. To him, a priest or elite religious leader manipulates the symbols of religion only to control his followers. In the final analysis, according to Durkheim, power and control are the only ends of religion. In Dumézil's early writings he claimed to have reconstructed Proto-Indo-European society using Durkheim's methods, creating what Brad S. Gregory calls a 'secular confessional history'.⁶⁸ Later, he moderated some of his claims, but continued to maintain that the Proto-Indo-Europeans projected their society on their gods, the study of whom thus gives us a direct link to their religion and their society.⁶⁹ But this position claims to reach what is unreachable, namely the experience of the Proto-Indo-Europeans. And by imposing modern terms on their religion – creating a 'secular confessional history' for the speakers of Proto-Indo-European – it inevitably devalues that religion. This limitation in the theorising of Dumézil and his followers needs to be kept in mind when discussing early Irish literature as a possible reflection of prehistoric religious understanding since there are no Proto-Indo-European speakers around to testify to their experience of the metaphysical world.

It may be an intellectually stimulating activity to bring social theories to bear on Indo-European society and religion. In fact this may reveal important aspects of the Indo-European thought-world. However, the theories themselves need to be seen for what they are and treated with caution by anyone who approaches the mythological dimension in early Irish literature, for fear of logical circularity or impoverishment of understanding.

At the same time, a caution should be voiced against over-enthusiastic or doctrinaire use of the 'Eurocentric' model. For instance, the early Irish emphasis on the Bible may reflect not just attempts to be more Christian than anyone else, or a search for a purer form of Christianity than anyone else's; and the special emphasis on the Old Testament may have been because the Irish *literati* felt themselves more fully at home within the movements of the tribes of the ancient Hebrews than in the more cosmopolitan world of the New Testament. (This would have been especially true before the Viking incursions into Ireland and the construction of trading ports along the coast.) But the Irish wisdom literature, while indubitably influenced by Old Testament literature, had, at its core, an Irish content that does not find expression elsewhere in Europe. This evident fact argues against a simple interpretation of early Irish literature as merely a reflection of Old Testament thought and conditions.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Brad S. Gregory, 'The Other Confessional History: On Secular Bias in the Study of Religion', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 139–143.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁶⁹Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), pp. 230–231.

⁷⁰Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of

The pattern of interaction between Ireland and Europe is still a developing field, and more will definitely come to light in the future. The danger is that what is distinctive about Ireland in the early Middle Ages may become lost in enthusiasm for new connections discovered, and the climate of scholarly opinion may shift as a result. This natural tendency needs to be tempered by the realisation that, while Irish ties to Europe were pervasive and strong (e. g. with networks of monks in most of Western Europe by the high Middle Ages), exotic innovations were filtered through a native understanding of Christianity.⁷¹ European influence in Ireland was at its height during the reforms of the twelfth century.⁷² At that time the filter provided in the early Middle Ages by native learned classes who resided in the monasteries was overthrown. This ended what, by that time, had become an ancient compromise between the native learned classes and Christian missionaries; now the learned classes returned to their roots as direct clients of kings and nobility. The removal of this native filtration system allowed orthodoxy within the Irish Church to grow. This is not to suggest that those within the early Medieval monasteries were crypto-pagans, as there is no evidence of that and much to contradict it.⁷³ However, it would seem that distinctive Irish content commingled with those parts of Christianity that resonated most with their sense of reality. As indicated above, the movements of the tribes of the ancient Hebrews would have fitted very naturally onto the tribal, yet integrated, world-view of the early Irish. In many ways, they may have seen themselves as reflections of those ancient people. In the life of Christ, they may have seen their ultimate salvation; and such notions as the one that Patrick would judge the Irish on Doomsday, suggest that they aspired, like the Jews to have their own saviour. This parallelism can also be seen in the way that Irish *literati* were stimulated by the World Chronicle to the writing of their own history⁷⁴ and to integrate the resulting synthetic history into their poetry and literature.⁷⁵ The synchronists attempted to place prehistoric Ireland within ancient European and Near Eastern history and link themselves to these wider traditions. But at the same time native Irish narrative themes, motivating patterns and mythological characters were integrated within the synthetic history, which in its turn became part of the 'given' background for early Irish literature. This complex, two-way activity demonstrates that the Irish *literati* were deeply in touch with their native literary tradition and inspired to interweave it with learning of the Church as they entered the community of faith.

Recognising the different intellectual and disciplinary starting points and objections of the several theoretical approaches which attempt to explain the place of early Irish literature in its

Ireland, 1990), pp. 82–83.

⁷¹Thomas O'Loughlin, 'A Celtic Theology': Some Awkward Questions and Observations', in Joseph Falaky Nagy, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002) and Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World and God in Early Irish Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

⁷²Damian Bracken, *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).

⁷³Francis John Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1973), p. 13.

⁷⁴Molly Miller, 'The Chronological Structure of the Sixth Age in the Rawlinson Fragment of the "Irish World-Chronicle"', *Celtica* 22 (1991).

⁷⁵T. M. Charles-Edwards, ed., *The Chronicle of Ireland*, vol. 2 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).

wider context allows us to understand that one does not have to follow any one theory exclusively. Each of the theories presented above, whether its perspective is diachronic or synchronic, has its merits and its own explanatory power. To evaluate the standing of a given section of the literature, as we have to do now, we are entitled to be eclectic if necessary, and to apply the pragmatic criterion of practical applicability. The complex native-exotic consistency of the material demands no less open-minded an approach.

6.3.5 *Fíthal*'s Theoretical Position

Which of the theoretical approaches described above is best able to find a place for *Fíthal*? It is helpful to proceed by scrutinising *Fíthal* through the lens of each of the differing theories described and critiqued above. We may then describe how *Fíthal* fits within each of the theories and with what results (*Fíthal* may be assessed in modern scholarly terms) before presenting our own assessment based on the eclectic principle enumerated above.

To begin with the 'nativist' theoretical construct, *Fíthal* is definitely a first function figure according to the Dumézil's reconstruction of the Indo-European thought-world. *Fíthal* is a keeper of the traditional laws and is often shown giving advice and assistance to other first function figures. He is connected with a trans-functional figure, Cormac mac Airt, at least in the later literature. The only apparent exception to this is in the *fianaigecht* texts which make him Finn mac Cumhaill's half-brother. Even here, however, *Fíthal* is connected with a first function religious figure, a druidess; and it can be argued that Finn himself is here being regarded as a first function figure – say as the source of inspirational wisdom, sibling to codified or institutional wisdom as personified by *Fíthal*. In these terms, *Fíthal*'s function is clear and unambiguous.

While his Dumézilian function is clear, *Fíthal* – unlike Finn – does not have etymologically related cognates in other languages through which we could confirm his existence as an established figure within the wider family of Indo-European deities. It could be argued that he once had this status, but that the narratives which testified to it have been lost. A possible explanation for this loss could be the esoteric side of the law, and the fact that much of it must have been modified or replaced as part of the Christianisation of the learned class in Ireland.⁷⁶ So it remains possible, in theory at least, that *Fíthal* was an obscured reflex of an Indo-European wisdom deity, and that this accounts for his persistently first function character.

For it to fit within the first function as conceived by Dumézil, the law had to be sacred law or to have a sacral character. Those who created the law were gods who were later seen as human figures who established the law within their respective communities.⁷⁷ As it happens,

⁷⁶D. A. Binchy, 'Linguistic and Legal Archaisms in the Celtic Law Books', *The Transactions of the Philological Society* (1959).

⁷⁷Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), pp. 114–144; C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 83–89. For

several early Irish law tracts are named after characters who may originally have been deities. For instance, *Bretha Déin Chécht* and the now-lost *Bretha Crédine* show that former gods and the law could be connected in early Ireland. Three judges are given their own law texts: Morann, Caratnia, and Fíthal. Each of these three, especially Morann and Fíthal, are first function figures; but since they are not given extraordinary attributes or abilities, scholars do not identify them as gods. However, in Morann's collar of truth and Fíthal's mention that he came from a faraway place (as stated to Cormac in their poetic dialogue), we may have some slight indications of an other-worldly dimension. In the case of Caratnia, we could point to the way he gained his scars by being burned alive within a house.⁷⁸ These mysterious circumstances mark them as special, and could perhaps be interpreted as having mythopoeic significance and a possible mythological past. Moreover, Morann and Fíthal have such similar circumstances that it could be argued that these two were one and the same figure in origin. Admittedly, Caratnia is more difficult to incorporate into this scheme; but his shamanic qualities could point to an earlier existence more in keeping with earlier manifestations of Morann and Fíthal in a tripartite grouping with law at the centre of its portfolio of concerns. As a Welsh or other Celtic cognate is not visible, one might conclude finally that this divine or mythical figure was an Irish innovation.

But this is pure speculation. While the correlations between Morann and Fíthal are undoubtedly suggestive, they do not provide enough evidence to let us postulate, say, a divine judge. Nor is it clear how such a figure would correlate with other divine figures who have been postulated, e. g. by such scholars as T. F. O'Rahilly in his *Early Irish History and Mythology*.⁷⁹ Moreover, Dumézil's theory was concerned with the sacred, whereas this quality seems to be notably absent from the attributes and associations of our judge-figures. In many ways, early Irish law was ancient; but as it stands it is not a repository of pre-Christian religion. The early Irish legal system was concerned with the differing classes of society and the ways and means of organising society. The religious involvement of early Irish law is confined to the regulation of Christian churches. There are a few well-known references to archaic mytho-religious rituals surviving into historical times, such as the final sanction of fasting as a way of bringing a superior to account. These, however, are not enough to let us peer into the past of early Irish law.⁸⁰ In none of these instances, do Morann or Fíthal appear. The most that can be said for Fíthal is that he is credited with setting down court procedure in *Aí Emnach*. While a divine origin could in theory be postulated for Fíthal, in the absence of more extensive literature concerning him, either legal or saga, it is difficult to sustain such an argument.

Dumézil's original analysis see, Georges Dumézil, *Mitra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty*, ed. Derek Coltman (New York: Zone Books, 1990).

⁷⁸Robin Stacey, 'Speaking in Riddles', in Próinséas Ní Chatháin, ed., *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

⁷⁹T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946).

⁸⁰Nerys Patterson, *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 36–61.

In terms of the ‘Eurocentric’ view of early Irish literature and society, Fíthal’s past is of less concern. A ‘Eurocentrist’ might maintain that Fíthal is a reflex of a universal human need, that he was created in a wisdom-figure mould taken from other literatures, especially the Old Testament, then given a student to teach and some legal texts to stabilise his character. This invention of a character would be tied in with the purpose of instruction; for much of the legal literature of early Ireland was in textbook format.⁸¹ From this point, Fíthal’s character would be presented to students of the law in a standardised and familiar medium. The law itself was not immutable, but reflected changes in thinking and practice that were brought from Europe to Ireland by the missionaries and churchmen who travelled abroad.⁸² At a certain point, Fíthal was exported from the legal-educational field through his appearance in the poetic dialogue with Cormac mac Airt. This enabled Fíthal to become part of the literary tradition.

An interesting theological point of concern to the ‘Eurocentric’ model, involves Fíthal and Morann. In *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*, Fíthal is described as a judge who drew on Natural Law before giving judgement. As we have pointed out (see Section 4.1.3.4), the author of *Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend* borrowed heavily from the Pseudo-Historical Prologue of the *Senchas Már*, where the concept of the Law of Nature was used to explain how human actions in pre-Christian times could be in keeping with God’s covenant. Fíthal’s role in the training of lawyers and judges has theological ‘cover’ by describing him as inspired by the truth of Natural Law, in line with the compromise communicated in PHP.⁸³ By contrast, Morann is described by the synthetic historians as having converted and believed in God.⁸⁴ In the ‘Eurocentric’ model, theological concerns are clearly felt about the pagan faith of these mythical judges and these texts provide evidence for the rehabilitation of such characters to accommodate them to the Christian faith. In the case of Fíthal, they attributed the Natural Law of Christian theology to him. In the case of Morann, they made him one of those who ‘believed before Christ’. It is not clear whether we should regard the differing treatment of Fíthal and Morann as serious or as unreal alternatives. Was Morann’s Christianisation a ‘fuller’ rehabilitation than Fíthal’s? And, if so, was this because his texts and character had a higher profile than Fíthal’s? This may be so; but the two cases could also be regarded as divergent but ultimately converging paths to the same destination – the reclaiming of pre-Christian figures from the fate that awaited pagans in Christian teaching.

In literary terms, the ‘Eurocentric’ model does not completely satisfy. An insistence on an outside source for ideas, themes and motifs can strain the evidence, just as over-reliance on

⁸¹Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 242–248.

⁸²For an example of this in the case of marriage law, see Bart Jaski, ‘Marriage Laws in Ireland and on the Continent in the Early Middle Ages’, in Christine Meek and Katharine Simms, eds., *‘The Fragility of Her Sex’?: Medieval Irishwomen in Their European Context* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996).

⁸³Peter Smith, ‘*Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend*: A Middle-Irish Poem on the Authors and Laws of Ireland’, *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994), p. 136.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

presumed native antecedents can have the same effect. McCone's efforts to establish a pervasive Christian background for *Echtrae Chonnlaí* constitute a majority of a book that is meant to be a textual edition.⁸⁵ This is not to downplay the importance of the influence of the Old Testament and the Classical literatures on early Irish literature. However, the comparative method used by both 'nativist' and 'Eurocentric' scholars works more naturally for the 'nativist', who compares myth to myth, than for the 'Eurocentric' who tends to like biblical or classical material out of context when presenting it as evidence for external inspiration in Irish texts. The search for Christian theology can thus deflect attention away from comparison with other Irish texts in the same cultural milieu, and with comparable texts which appear in other cultures due to universal considerations.

What is the place of Fíthal in terms of the two major theoretical positions above? The 'nativist' instinct would be to combine characters – in this case, Morann, Fíthal, and Caratnia – to see whether they can be taken as reflexes of a deity with legal connotations. Fíthal would be followed backwards as far as the evidence for him could be taken, which would mean to the Old Irish period. If one could come up with a Welsh cognate of one of these characters, this would encourage us to see him as a Celtic figure, as with Irish *Goibniu*, Welsh *Gofannon*, and *Gofynyon* in the case of the smith deity. Since the evidence for a Celtic or Indo-European past, is lacking, one might look to locate Fíthal in the emergence in a more recent phase – say, at the time when Christianisation caused the suppression of the sacral aspects of the law. Fíthal and others may, in other words, have been created to supply founder figures for wisdom when wisdom became a secular concern.

The 'Eurocentric' position would focus on the universal aspects of Fíthal's character and the Old Testament giving particular weight to the latter. His position as an exponent of Natural Law would be duly noted, as would the way this related to the Christian elements now known to be embedded in early Irish law. Like the 'nativist' position, this too has persuasive arguments and evidence supporting them.

As we have seen however, there are significant problems with both theoretical positions. Without more information, especially from the legal traditions, the position of Fíthal prior to his appearance in the poetic dialogue is difficult to elaborate. The literary record hints at a broad, but not a deep understanding of early Irish law among the authors of these tales. Thus, the literary accounts of the actions and character of Fíthal are divided off from the persona and teachings of Fíthal the Wisdom Figure, delivered in the first instance for the instruction of lawyers and judges. This divide is not easily bridged, and calculating its extent involves the not yet well-understood nature of education in the monasteries. The legal material associated with Fíthal seems linguistically and in its style and content to belong fully with the early legal

⁸⁵Kim McCone, ed., *Echtrae Chonnlaí and the Beginnings of Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, and Bibliography and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: Kim McCone, 2000), pp. 47–119.

tradition. We have argued that the poetic dialogue is the pivotal point at which *Fíthal* entered the literary world. If that argument is to stand, there must have been some common ground shared by those who created formal poetry and those who created formal law. This conclusion is also suggested by the literary references to the law which were cited in chapters 3 and 4. For taken collectively, they show an easy familiarity with the procedures of pleading and judgement. It is on that basis that scholars have argued – correctly, in our view – that the Irish schooling could be conceived as ‘interdisciplinary’, with poets and lawyers being educated together up to a certain point, when the interests and possibly the class of the individual student would lead to specialisation in the chosen profession, poetic or legal. Even after the reforms of the twelfth century when the legal profession fell into the hands of families who specialised in law, while other families taught poetry and verse-craft,⁸⁶ the branches of the intelligentsia were never completely out of touch with each other, and the outlines of the law and the basics of poetic verse-craft would have been known to aspiring poets and lawyers alike.

We argued too that the poetic dialogue defined the position of *Fíthal* for later authors. Some additional ideas were introduced in the Fenian context, in *Acallam na Senórach* and *Duanaire Finn*; these were relatively minor. The basic association of *Fíthal* with Cormac mac Airt was accepted as built by later authors, firming up *Fíthal*’s place as a minor ‘star’ in the firmament of early Irish tradition.

In the early legal context *Fíthal* like Morann was one of a group of figures who occupied a particular place in the mythology of the profession. These exemplary teachers of law were projects of the active side of the teacher-student relationship that is inherent in the make-up of any profession. They were the primordial sources of the chain of instruction which led down to the learning experience of student lawyers. Whether *Fíthal* is a reflex of some Celtic or Indo-European figure, or whether he owes more to Biblical/Classical models, he was a paradigmatic figure, both as a provider of wise judgements and as a teacher of those who were to succeed him. His example was practical rather than theoretical. In a sense, he was a ‘teaching aid’ to those who wrote and taught early Irish law in the monasteries and later within the legal families.

In the literary context *Fíthal*’s place is clear. He is the personification of early Irish law in the golden age of Cormac mac Airt’s mythical reign. As such, he held a position complementary to that of the Wise Ruler, which is why he is portrayed as helping Cormac in the writing of law and history. In essence, he helped Cormac to establish order in Ireland. Even in those later texts where he seems to function merely as a device to extract plot characters from legal impasses, he is restoring order and we can sense a vestige of his original mythic role a contributor to the establishment of ideal order in Ireland.

These two conceptions of *Fíthal* are not exclusive of one another, but compatible and complementary. They both have mythic content: in the legal texts we find a didactic myth about

⁸⁶Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), pp. 250–263.

the law and how to practise it, whereas in the literary texts the myth is informative about the nature of society and the place of the law within it. The former speaks in the first instance to lawyers, while the latter's primary audience was wider. The goals of the early Irish jurist and literary author were one and the same: to use the past to instruct and guide readers in the present.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter presents facets of the character of Fíthal which help to place him within a theoretical context. We constructed as complete a picture of Fíthal as the available evidence allows. Each of the facets is scrutinised in the light of the other facets. The upshot of these explorations is to confirm that Fíthal has essentially two major personae: one legal and the other literary. This distinction is crucial, but, it is not the only plane on which to examine him. This chapter shows him in several other ways: genealogically, as a wisdom figure, as a judge, comparatively and theoretically.

Genealogically, Fíthal is a puzzling character because of the textual variation. The differing genealogies that confront us were meant by their authors to impart an aura of antiquity and dignity to Fíthal. Because he was not a member of a known dynasty, his genealogy could be supplied by an author. In this way, Fíthal could be attached to persons within the genealogical corpus, including a connection to a shadowy but major mythological personage. The reference here is to Rudraige, a legendary High King from the mythical prehistoric period, as seen in *The Decision as to Cormac's Sword*. As genealogy was important to the Irish, the reader would have expected a genealogy to accompany an important character. However, it seems from the evidence relating to Fíthal, that a consistent quasi-historical genealogy was not a requirement.

At a more general level, the universal side of Fíthal was reiterated and explored in the light of his other aspects. The relationship between Wisdom Figure and Rule, personified by law givers and kings is an ancient division of the 'first function'. It acknowledges the role of those who attempt by words to temper the more precipitate and headstrong actions of kings in their practical, political dealings. In the case of Fíthal, we saw how the more universal qualities of the wisdom figure were suppressed, and his particular place in early Irish literature as a judge and learned jurist was foregrounded. Simultaneously, the presence of a wisdom literature at the head of the legal tradition was used to instruct and enlighten students of the law in a personalised mode.

Fíthal was primarily a judge and jurist of early Irish law. This office adhered to him throughout the centuries down to Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*. As a judge, Fíthal appears in the literature as an agent for peaceful resolution of social issues, e. g. he could soothe the animosity generated by a slight to a warrior's honour. Earlier in the poetic dialogue with Cormac, he himself was the belligerent and disruptive character, and it was the king who fulfilled the role

of peacemaker. Earlier still, in the legal tradition, Fíthal was an eminent judge and jurist who wrote important legal texts. At the same time, he served as an exemplary teacher and wisdom figure for the early Irish jurists.

A few characters who appear in early Irish literature are comparable with Fíthal. The most fruitful comparison is with Morann who shares a number of points of contact with Fíthal. Conceivably, they were both reflexes of one and the same paradigmatic figure in a time previous to the recording of Irish literature and law. Whatever the case may be, the similarities of the two characters are striking and suggestive. The other two comparable characters, Fintan and Sencha, do not share the same level of correspondence as Fíthal and Morann. For Fintan and Sencha, the main comparison is a 'negative' one: namely, that their intellectual endeavours stand in opposition to the martial characteristics of the other characters in the literature in which they appear.

To complete the picture of Fíthal's place in early Irish literature, it proved necessary to explore certain theoretical conceptions of the nature of early Irish literature. Within the theory of the tripartite structure of the Indo-European thought-world constructed by Dumézil, Fíthal's connection comes to the fore and he is characterised as a first function figure. This categorisation links him with religious observance and theoretical endeavour in Indo-European myth. Within the 'Eurocentric' conception of early Irish literature, the filter of the Biblical and Classical world-view dominated the recording of the early literature. In this perspective Fíthal's possession of the knowledge of Natural Law helped legitimise his continuing presence, as a pre-Christian character, within the Christianised legal tradition.

These two conceptions were complemented by two less well known theories as to the place of mythology in early Irish literature. The first, that of M.-L. Sjoestedt, eschews the Indo-European framework for analysing purely Irish material. Sjoestedt's conclusion is that early Irish literature does contain embedded information about pre-Christian Irish deities, but that the gods we glimpse are more helpfully seen as possessors of specific skills than as 'departmental' gods in the normal Indo-European sense. From this perspective, Fíthal does not look like an old deity because he is not associated with any of those characters traditionally seen as Irish gods and goddesses. His undoubted mythic attributes would therefore have originated in a more recent exemplary figure in an origin legend of the legal profession – i. e. as a hero rather than a god, if we may put it thus. Fíthal's association with Rudraige may hence be seen as following from his establishment in this role, rather than preceding it. The second conception of early Irish literature was constructed by Hilda Ellis Davidson. She is critical of the Dumézilian stance though she follows Dumézil in believing that position, the religious overtones in early Irish and Germanic literature correspond to a form of religion which provided a framework to hold a community together. This form of religion was focused on a ritual year in which the king

played a large role, officiating at feasts and other rituals.⁸⁷ It is hard to relate Fíthal to these conceptions as we know of no rituals or feasts which were associated with him.

To conclude this discussion, our own theory of the place of Fíthal in early Irish literature is brought forward. This theory focused upon the dynamic evolution of Fíthal's character rather than seeking to find a niche for him in a theoretical past time. This approach to Fíthal avoids the problems of the previously mentioned theoretical positions and motivates that dynamic through the activities of the historical authors of early Irish law and literature. As we see it, Fíthal was used by jurists and later authors to explain their world. From the point of view of the jurists, Fíthal was their founding father, one of them and one of the wisdom figures whom they used to teach their own students early Irish law. Later, in his 'literary' phase, Fíthal became a pre-eminent judge and jurist in the synthetic prehistory created by the early Irish *literati*. This literary conception of Fíthal outlasted the legally based Fíthal by a long way.

This chapter attempted to produce an integrated view of the literary appearances of Fíthal in early Irish literature and in the legal tradition. Each facet of his character was brought forth and examined. The theoretical considerations surrounding his character were also brought forward for discussion and analysis. The outcome has been to place Fíthal within a new theoretical framework and, within it, to delineate his trajectory within early Irish literature. This shows that Fíthal, while a minor character in the literature as a whole, was important to scholars with specialised knowledge of the traditional law of Ireland, and had a secure if limited place in the wider literary tradition.

⁸⁷Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 142–143.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

We are indebted to previous scholars and to three in particular, for the research foundations of this thesis. First, Colin Ireland's list of literary references to Fíthal expedited the search for material for chapters 3 and 4.¹ In the legal literature, Liam Breatnach's companion to the *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* in which he detailed the legal material ascribed to Fíthal was fundamental.² For the legal analysis in this thesis, Fergus Kelly's *Guide to Early Irish Law* was invaluable.³ The work of these three scholars formed a set of reference points by which the development of this thesis was guided.

As scholarly writing about Fíthal is rather limited in bulk, other scholars' work on related characters became important as a mean of establishing a literary context within which Fíthal could be placed. Chapter 1 reviewed the sequence of scholarly writers, and the categories of approach which were deemed important for this thesis.

The second chapter recognised the need to provide a comparative perspective for the character of Fíthal. This was effected at three levels: Universal, Biblical/Classical, and 'native' Irish. First, wisdom figures in a wide sense appear to be universal constructs, very often found in association with legal and legalistic traditions. Second, the Biblical/Classical level demanded exploration as a pervasive presence in early Irish literature. More particularly, the Irish fascination with the Old Testament suggested parallels and potential models. Third, particularly culture-specific or 'native' elements in early Irish wisdom literature were analysed. Our conclusion is that Universal aspects of wisdom literature, mediated by the Biblical/Classical treatments, provoked a response among the Irish *literati*; native traditions and traditional modes of expression shaped the way in which the literature would emerge. This combination of influences created the striking aspects of the wisdom literature of the Irish. While Irish law as such was not

¹Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhímaic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 48–52.

²Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), pp. 364–365.

³Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988).

explored in this thesis, reference to a general legal context was deemed necessary to underpin the conclusions we sought to reach. The basis for this assumption was also discussed in Chapter 2, where it was argued that the relationships seen in Ireland between laws and aphorisms of legendary judges and law-givers is understandable on general grounds. While the historical applications of these laws are still debated by scholars, no one disputes the fact that the early Irish *literati* had an interest in their own legal traditions.

The third and fourth chapters analysed the appearances of Fíthal in Gaelic literature from Old Irish law tracts until the eighteenth-century. These analyses form the heart of the thesis and prepared the ground for the ensuing discussion. The hypothesis that we claim is vindicated through these chapters is that the character of Fíthal underwent a discernible pattern of development, with distinct suggestions of inter-textuality visible at a number of points.

The pivotal composition which saw Fíthal move from the legal realm into the more general literature was reserved for special treatment in Chapter 5. This chapter contains an edition of the dialogue between Fíthal and Cormac mac Airt. This text was the earliest in which Fíthal was given an interlocutor who was not his student or his son and it gave Fíthal a secure place within the mythology of early Irish literature and a basis from which subsequent literature could develop. This linkage with Cormac was so powerful that it eclipsed the alternative tradition that Fíthal was Finn's brother.

While Chapter 3, 4, and 5 outlined Fíthal's career as a literary figure, Chapter 6 gathered together recurrent features of Fíthal's 'character' which linked some texts and groups of texts. Here, Fíthal's genealogy, his connections to other early Irish characters of similar type, and modern evaluations of his status were explored. This chapter concluded that the trajectory of Fíthal's literary career can be plotted from his appearance as a wisdom figure of legal import to the poetic dialogue between Fíthal and Cormac mac Airt, which encouraged subsequent writers to regard the character of Fíthal as a fixture for stories requiring a certain sort of wisdom figure. This ensured that Fíthal would survive the following centuries.

Based on the foregoing, a description of Fíthal's place in early Irish literature is now attempted. Fíthal, the wisdom figure in the early legal texts, was a source of instruction for students of law within the monastic centres of learning. As such, he bears comparison with such similar figures as Morann and Caratnia. The similarities between these three characters are as significant as their identification as judges in the texts in which they appear. The connections are as deep as the wisdom literature itself, as they reflect the forms and methods of international wisdom literature while teaching the law to their students within the context of their culture.

It is not wholly clear by what precise means Fíthal became associated with the wise King Cormac. Perhaps, it was a sense that Cormac needed a wise judge/wisdom figure to bolster his place in the literature as the essential wise king, and further the sense that his reign was truly the golden age of Ireland, that provided the trigger. In any event, some time in the tenth century,

either a lawyer or a scholar familiar with early Irish law composed a poetic dialogue between Fíthal and Cormac. Its memorable and thought-provoking juxtaposition of the two kinds of wisdom figure may have been instrumental in ensuring Fíthal's place, either as a judge or as an adviser, in the later tradition. In some of these later texts he appropriates functions usually reserved for poets, although he never loses his primary aspect as a judge and arbiter. We suggest that this functional overlap between poet and judge is based upon the similarities in the speech act: the poet in recitations of his poetry and the judge in recitations of his judgements. Fíthal's last 'traditional' appearance is in Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, where it is interesting to note that the essential elements of his character as a judge and wisdom figure are basically intact. For his final bow, he appears, but now in a barely recognisable form: MacPherson's *Fingal* and *Temora* which presented the bare association with Morann as an indication of Fíthal's earlier character.

While our research gives a general outline of Fíthal, we have encountered places where further research might yield additional details, e.g. *Finnsruth Fíthail*. Again, further investigation into the characters of Morann and Caratnia might deepen our understanding of the status they and Fíthal held, and how far they interacted with one another in early Irish literature. And, of course, future developments in theorising about early Irish literary tradition as a whole may require revision of the conclusions arrived at here.

It is hoped that this thesis brings forth questions about the links between early Irish law and early Irish literature as a whole. Because Fíthal and other mythical judges represent the legal profession in literary texts, they may be said to represent some sort of a nexus between law and literature or between legal and literary learning. Such nexuses can be important for our understanding of the way in which the law was conceptualised in early Irish society. While legal matters were mysterious to those who did not practise them, they were manifestly important to all who were ruled by the law, and not just those who wrote it. In literature, as in life, the intervention of legal figures can be as decisive as it is brief.

The quest for material involving Fíthal was wider than anticipated at the outset, and the results of the research were more widely dispersed and more disparate than expected, both in terms of the genres of literature represented, and in chronological time-span. More importantly, collecting the relevant texts revealed a continuing and developing 'character', and it became necessary to account for this continuity, and to ascertain its nature. The latter of these tasks led to an examination of the function of wisdom literature and the status of wisdom figures beyond the confines of Irish literature, in a medieval Christian context and in broadly human terms. The former task required a closer focus on the successive 'receptions' of texts involving wisdom figures like Fíthal, and generated interesting insights into the circumstances of transmission and the inter-textuality of Early Irish literature.

This wider perspective contributes to our understanding of this segment of the tradition.

There is still plenty to research. A comparison of judicial figures like Fíthal with such literary arbiters, assessors, and testers as Manannán mac Lir, Cú Roí, and the Judge of Truth in *Merugud Uilix*, and so on, would seem a potentially rewarding avenue to explore and there is much to do on the actual *Tecosca* attributed to the wise judges themselves, including Fíthal.

Appendix A

Diplomatic Editions and Translations of Dialogue

A.1 TCD MS 1339 (The Book of Leinster) pg. 149

Fíthal	Niba me linfes do neoch dara thráth. gel <i>cech</i> nua lond cech scíth ní hinund frith fogeib cach.
Cormac	A Fíthail ebair coirm cid iar lithaib. ní íath dochor for rathaib fathaig cid fir nach Fíthail.
Fíthal	A Chormaic co mmét ualle 7 airdairc cetlud ríge rodar n-inlaig condar dimdaig diar tarbairt.
Cormac	A Fíthail an ris condar sídaig bid contracht for muir mór bíd ítu ar n-ól a Fíthail.
Fíthal	Nimda muad atbersa frit co llór lúath. iss ed is messu fuair laech bith oc tigernu gaeth guach.
Cormac	Atbersa cid olc ra nech

ní chélsa friar ndebech(?)
 iss ed is messu tic tech
 amus anaith airbirech.

Fíthal Ni thibér
 šerc do neoch nacham chara.
 noco tairniubsa mo bríg
 cid cian om thír domrala.

Cormac Ór oc rigaib co rogail
 otá tossach in domain.
 is lesc lemm beith cen amus
 7 ro charus m'folaig

Fíthal Niba me
 gebat om rí g bethad cé
 iar ndigna óir 7 ech.
 Cía beith nech niba mé.

A.2 Rawl. B512 f. 116v. B

Fíthal Nvcua mé.
 lilfes do neoch dar a tráth.
 gel gach núa lonn cach sgíth
 ní hinnann frith fogeb cách.

Cormac A Fithail.
 an biucán gurdar síthaig.
 ní íad dochar ar rathaibh
 fáthaig cid fir nach Fithail.

Fíthal A Cormaic.
 co méit váilli 7 orrdirc.
 cid einech rígh rontidnaic.
 atar dimdaig di air torbairt.

Cormac A Fíthail.
 ebur cid linn íar lithaibh.
 bíd *contracht* ar i muir mór
 bíd itv iar nól a Fíthail.

Fíthal Is dom fuáth.
 sloinnfetsa deit cv leir lúath.
 Is *ed* is mesa fvair laech.
 beith ac tigerna gaeth gvach

- Cormac Gid meisi ní c  l ar nech.
 bid vasal gid *air* deibech.
 Is *ed* is messa tic tech.
 Amus *inna  l* oirbirech.
- F  thal N   hail dam.
 serc dvine n  cham cara.
 nvga tornem ort mo *brig*.
 cid cian om t  r domrala.
- Cormac Is gn  th o tosach domain.
   r oc r  gaib va rogain.
 Nirb a  l dam beith gan amos.
 7 ro *caros* m'  laid.
- F  thal Cian *gardi* caith  r mo r  .
 oc r  ghaib in domain ce.
 arm choemv   r 7 ech.
 Ce gaba nech n   ba me. N.

A.3 Rawl. B512 f. 116v. B (Prologue)

Fithel rocan inso iar nol fleidi bici br  ghmairi do cormac secha 7 rofrecart cormac eisivm .i. fecht ba   cormac ac   l fleidi brigmaire i temraig b  i dono fithel fe  gbriathrach isin baili 7 ni rvcad d  l na fleidhe h  . Dor  acht cormac arab  rach ina tegh r  g 7 atbert fithel fris.   l atibis secham sa are  r a cormac ar f  thel. Ised ar cormac nocha n  bed hathair sech maitisi ar fithel conid de rochan fithel 7 ro fregair cormac.

Maitisi f  al finngaine. brethem ro ba   ic art ainfer. secha n   rachad d  l. Ar   r gall 7 gaidel.

Isam gait  hi ina art. Ised b  s mo smacht do   r is feir mo cert is mo c  all. Is mo berim breth co f  r.

Conidh and do r  nsat na rvnna.

A.4 TCD 1337 (H.3.18) pg. 40

Fithell dr   fri   Corbmac iar nol fleide bice brigmaire secha

- F  thal Nugua me.
 Anfus(?) ag neach dara trath
 gel cach nua lonn cach scith
 ni hinand(?) frith fogaib cach.
- Cormac A Fithail
 an biucan corbam sithaig.

ni maith dochor fr̃at̃h(?).
fathaig cid fir nach Fithail

Fíthal A Corbmac.
comeid nuaille 7 nordaire
cid enech rig rontidnaic.
adar dimdag diar toirbairt.

Cormac A Fithail
ebar linn cid iar lithaib bid *contracht*
ar in mvir mor.
bid ita iar nol a Fiathail.

Fíthal Is dom fuath. sloindfetsa dit co ler luath.
is *ed* is mesam fuair laech.
bith ic tigerna goeth guach

Cormac gid mese ni cel *ar nech.*
adirsā tria(?) *air debech*
ised is mesam (?)cc tech.
amus *anaith* or *bech*(?)

Fíthal Ni hail *dam* (?)cc do dvine nacham *cara*
no *chatorneb* ort mo *brig.*
ni *cian* om *tir*(?) dom *ral*-(?)

Cormac Is gnath otosac domvin.
or ac rigaib ua ro gain.
nir hail dom bith *cian* amus
7 ro *charus* mfolaid

Fíthal Cian *gairde chaither* mo re.
Og rigaib in domain ce.
arm digna oir 7 ech.
Cia gabad *nech* ni ba me. Nugua me.

Bibliography

- Aarne, Antti Amatus, *The Types of the Folktale: a Classification and Bibliography*, 2nd edition (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1961).
- Abbott, T. K. and Gwynn, E. J., *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1921).
- Ahlqvist, Anders, *The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the Auraicept na nÉces, with Introduction, Commentary, and Indices* (Helsinki: Helsinki Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1983).
- , ‘Is acher in gaíth...úa Lothlind’, in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 19–27.
- Ahyan, Stepan, ‘The Hero, the Woman, and the Impregnable Stronghold: A Model’, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 79–100.
- Aitchison, N. B., *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge: Cruithne Press, 1994).
- Åkerman, Susanna, ‘On the Impossibility of Abdicating: Queen Christina of Sweden and the Spiritual Crown’, *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 212–227.
- Aldhouse-Green, Miranda, ‘Pagan Celtic Iconography and the Concept of Sacral Kingship’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 52 (2001), pp. 102–117.
- Aldhouse-Green, Miranda J., *Pagan Celtic Religion and Early Celtic Myth: Connections or Coincidence?*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 82–90.
- Allard, G.-H., ed., *The Commentary on Martianus Attributed to John Scottus: It's Hiberno-Latin Background* (Montreal: Cahiers d'études médiévales, 1986).
- Allen, N. J., ‘Romulus and the Fourth Function’, in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 13–36.
- Ankersmit, F. R., ‘“Presence” and Myth’, *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006), pp. 328–336.

- Arbuthnot, Sharon, 'Short Cuts to Etymology: Placenames in *Cóir Anmann*', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 79–86.
- , 'Fíthal in *Cóir Anmann*', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 20 (2000), pp. 197–200.
- , 'The Manuscript Tradition of *Cóir Anmann*', *Studia Celtica* 35 (2001), pp. 285–298.
- Arnold, Bettina, 'The Material Culture of Social Structure: Rank and Status in Early Iron Age Europe', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 43–52.
- Arnoult, Sharon L., 'The Sovereignities of Body and Soul: Women's Political and Religious Actions in the English Civil War', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 228–249.
- Balé, Marcos A., 'Sacrifice at Samain: The Figure of Cromm Cruaich', *Cosmos* 18 (2002), pp. 87–102.
- Banks, Glyn Welden, 'Images of Welsh Identity in Shakespeare', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Yläne, Krisi, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 79–90.
- Barnwell, P. S., 'Emperors, Jurists, and Kings: Law and Custom in the Late Roman and Early Medieval West', *Past and Present* 168 (2000), pp. 6–29.
- Barvarova, Mary R., 'Topics in Lydian Verse: Accentua', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 227–248.
- Baumgarten, Rolf, 'The Kindred Metaphors in "Bechbretha" and "Coibnes Uisci Thairinde"', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 4 (1985), pp. 307–27.
- , 'Co Nómad n-Ó: An Early Irish Socio-legal Timescale', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17–18 (2003–4), pp. 338–356.
- , 'Creative Medieval Etymology and Irish Hagiography (Lasair, Columba, Senán)', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 49–78.
- Beatty, Bernard, 'The Force of "Celtic Memories" in Byron's Thought', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 103–116.
- Belier, Wouter W., *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie Tripartite"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991).
- , 'The First Function', in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 37–72.
- Bell, Catherine, 'Paradigms Behind (and Before) the Modern Concept of Religion', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 27–46.

- Bentley, Michael, 'Herbert Butterfield and the Ethics of Historiography', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 55–71.
- , 'Past and "Presence": Revisiting Historical Ontology', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006), pp. 349–361.
- Bergin, Osborn, ed., *Stories from Keating's History of Ireland*, 3rd edition (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1930 [repub. 1996]).
- Bernhardt-House, Phillip A., 'Imbolc: A New Interpretation', *Cosmos* 18 (2002), pp. 57–76.
- Best, R. I., 'Bodleian MS. Laud 610', *Celtica* 3 (1956), pp. 338–339.
- , Bergin, Osborn and O'Brien, M. A., eds., *The Book of Leinster : formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, vol. 6 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954–1983).
- Bhaldraithe, Tomás de, 'Risteard Pluincéad—a Neglected Pioneer Irish Lexicographer', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 3 (1990), pp. 1–8.
- Bhreathnach, Edel, 'Two Contributors to the Book of Leinster: Bishop Finn of Kildare and Gilla na Náen Ua Duinn', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 105–111.
- Bieler, Ludwig, 'Casconius, the Monster of the *Navigatio Brendani*', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 5 (1945–47), pp. 139–140.
- , 'The Irish Book of Hymns: A Palaeographical Study', *Scriptorium* 2 (1948), pp. 177–194.
- , 'John Colgan as Editor', *Franciscan Studies* 8 (1948), pp. 1–24.
- , *The Humanism of St. Columbus*, in *Mélanges Colombaniens: Acts du Congrès International de Luxeuil*, Congrès international de Luxeuil (Paris: Editions Alsatia, July 1951), pp. 95–102.
- , 'Versus Sancti Columban: A Problem Restated', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 76 (1951), pp. 376–382.
- , 'The Island of Scholars', *Revue du moyen âge latin* 8 (1952), pp. 213–231.
- , *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi*, vol. 2 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1952).
- , 'The Hymn of St. Secundinus', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C* 55 (1953), pp. 117–127.
- , 'Trias Thaumaturga', in Donnell, T. O., ed., *Father John Colgan, OFM, 1592–1658, Essays in Commemoration of the Third Centenary of his Death* (Dublin: Assisi Press, 1959), pp. 41–49.
- , 'Editing Saint Columbanus: A Reply', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 22 (1961), pp. 139–150.

- Bieler, Ludwig, 'Review of C. Selmer, *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 72 (1961), pp. 164–169.
- , 'Review of Jean Laporte: *Le Pénitentiel de Saint Colmban*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 12 (1961), pp. 106–112.
- , 'The Celtic Hagiographer', *Studia Patristica* 5 (1962), pp. 243–265.
- , 'Review of A. O. and M. O. Anderson, *Adomnan's Life of Columba*', *Irish Historical Studies* 13 (1962–63), pp. 175–184.
- , *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963).
- , 'The Text Tradition of Dicuil's *Liber de mensura orbis terrae*', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C* 64 (1965), pp. 1–31.
- , 'A Gallican Psalter in Irish Script: Vatican Lat. 12910', in Gumbert, J. P. and Haan, J. M. de, eds., *Litterae textuales: Essays presented to G. I. Lieftinck, 2: Texts & Manuscripts*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: A. L. Van Gendt, 1972), pp. 7–15.
- , 'Remarks on Eriugena's Original Latin Prose', in O'Meara, John J. and Bieler, Ludwig, eds., *The Mind of Eriugena: Papers of a Colloquium, Dublin, 14–18 July 1970* (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1973), pp. 140–146.
- , and Carney, James, 'The Lambeth Commentary', *Ériu* 23 (1972), pp. 1–55.
- Bieler, Ludwig and MacNiocaill, Gearóid, 'Fragment of an Irish Double Psalter with Glosses in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin', *Celtica* 5 (1961), pp. 28–39.
- Binchy, D. A., 'Bretha Crólige', *Ériu* 12 (1938), pp. 1–77.
- , 'Sick-Maintenance in Irish Law', *Ériu* 12 (1938), pp. 78–134.
- , 'Secular Institutions', in Dillon, Myles, ed., *Early Irish Society* (Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1954), pp. 52–65.
- , 'Bretha Nemed', *Ériu* 17 (1955), pp. 3–5.
- , 'Irish Law Tracts Re-Edited', *Ériu* 17 (1955), pp. 52–85.
- , 'Fair of Tailtiu and the Feast of Tara', *Ériu* 18 (1958), pp. 113–138.
- , 'Linguistic and Legal Archaisms in the Celtic Law Books', *The Transactions of the Philological Society* (1959), pp. 14–24.
- , 'Bretha Déin Chécht', *Ériu* 20 (1966), pp. 1–66.
- , 'Mellbretha', *Celtica* 3 (1968), pp. 144–154.
- , *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).
- , 'An Archaic Legal Poem', *Celtica* 9 (1971), pp. 152–168.

- Binchy, D. A., 'Distrain in Irish Law', *Celtica* 10 (1973), pp. 22–71.
- , 'A Text on the Forms of Distrain', *Celtica* 10 (1973), pp. 72–86.
- , 'Irish History and Irish Law: I', *Studia Hibernica* 15 (1975), pp. 7–31.
- , 'The Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Studia Celtica* 10-11 (1975–76), pp. 15–28.
- , *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, vol. 6 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979).
- , *Críth Gablach* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979).
- Bitel, Lisa M., *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).
- Bloomfield, Morton W. and Dunn, Charles W., *The Role of the Poet in Early Societies* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989).
- Boll, Sheila, 'Seduction, Vengeance, and Frustration in Fingal Rónáin: The Role of Foster-Kin in Structuring Narrative', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 47 (2004), pp. 1–16.
- Borsje, Jacqueline, 'Approaching Danger: Togail Bruidne Da Derga and the Motif of Being One-Eyed', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 75–99.
- Bracken, Damian, 'Virgilius Grammaticus and the Earliest Hiberno-Latin Literature', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 251–261.
- , *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).
- Bradley, Arthur, 'Shelly, Ireland and Romantic Orientalism', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 117–129.
- Bradley, Ian, *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).
- Bragg, Lois, 'Telling Silence: Alingualism in Old Icelandic Myth, Legend, and Saga', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 267–296.
- Bray, Dorothy Ann, *The Manly Spirit of St Monenna*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 171–181.
- Brearley, Denis, 'The Lemmata from the Gospel of Matthew in CLM 6233 and Their Irish Affinities', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 9–28.

- Breatnach, Caoimhín, 'An Irish Homily on the Life of the Virgin Mary', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 23–58.
- , 'The Transmission and Structure of *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 91–108.
- , 'The Significance of the Orthography of Irish Proper Names in the *Codex Salmanticensis*', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 85–102.
- Breatnach, Liam, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: the Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984), pp. 439–59.
- , 'The Ecclesiastical Element in the Old-Irish Legal Tract *Cáin Fhuithirbe*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986), pp. 36–52.
- , *Uraicecht na Ríar: The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987).
- , 'The First Third of the *Bretha Nemed Toísech*', *Ériu* 40 (1989), pp. 1–40.
- , 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge', in McCone, Kim et al., eds., *Stair na Gaeilge: in ómos do Pádraig Ó Fiannachta* (Maigh Nuad: Roinn na Sean-Ghaeilge, Coláiste Phádraig, Maigh Nuad, 1994), pp. 221–333.
- , 'On the Glossing of early Irish Law-Texts, Fragmentary Texts, and Some Aspects of the Laws Relating to Dogs', in Ahlqvist, Anders et al., eds., *Celtica Helsingiensia: Proceedings from a Symposium on Celtic Studies* (Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1996), pp. 11–20.
- , 'Cáin Ónae', in Jasanoff, Jay, Melchert, H. Craig and Oliver, Lisi, eds., *Mír Curad: Studies in Honor of Calvert Watkins* (Innsbruck: Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 1998), pp. 29–46.
- , 'On Words Ending in a Stressed Vowel in Early Irish', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 133–42.
- , *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005).
- Breatnach, Pádraig A., 'An Appeal for a Guarantor', *Celtica* 21 (1990), pp. 28–37.
- , 'A Seventeenth-Century Abridgement of *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill*', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002), pp. 77–171.
- Breen, Aiden, 'Pseudo-Cyprian De Duodecim Abusivis Saeculi and the Bible', in Ní Chatháin, P. and Richter, M., eds., *Ireland and Christendom: the Bible and the Missions* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 230–245.
- Breeze, Andrew, 'Two Bardic Themes: The Trinity in the Blessed Virgin's Womb, and the Rain of Folly', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 1–15.
- Brenneman, Jr., Walter L., 'Serpents, Cows, and Ladies: Contrasting Symbolism in Irish and Indo-European Cattle-Raiding Myths', *History of Religions* 28 (1989), pp. 340–354.

- Brosman, Paul, 'The Latin Feminine u-stems', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 249–266.
- Brough, John, 'The Tripartite Ideology of the Indo-Europeans: an Experiment in Method', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 22 (1959), pp. 68–86.
- Brown, Peter, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200–1000*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).
- Bruford, Alan, 'Folktales and Romances', *Béalodeas* 34 (1966).
- , *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Medieval Romances: A Study of the Early Modern Irish 'Romantic Tales' and Their Oral Derivatives* (Dublin: The Folklore of Ireland Society, 1969).
- , 'Oral and Literary Fenian Tales', *Béalodeas* 54/55 (1986/7), pp. 25–35.
- Brun, Patrice, 'From Chieftdom to State Organization in Celtic Europe', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 13–25.
- Büchsenschütz, Olivier, 'The Significance of Major Settlements in European Iron Age Society', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 53–63.
- Bullough, Donald, 'The Career of Columbanus', in Lapidge, Michael, ed., *Columbanus: Studies on Latin Writings* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), pp. 1–28.
- Butler, Jon, 'Theory and God in Gotham', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 47–61.
- Byrne, Francis John, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1973).
- , 'Chiasmus and Hyperbaton in the Annals of Ulster', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 54–64.
- Cahill, Michael, 'The Ps-Jerome Markan Commentary: A Clue to Provenance?', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 29–35.
- Cambrensis, Giraldus, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, ed. O'Meara, John J. (Atlantic Highlands: North America: Humanities Press, 1982).
- Campanile, Enrico, 'Today, after Dumézil', in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 73–82.
- Carey, John, 'The Two Laws in Dubthach's Judgment', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 19 (1990), pp. 1–18.
- , 'An Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Ériu* 45 (1994), pp. 1–32.

- Carey, John, 'Saint Patrick, the Druids, and the End of the World', *History of Religions* 36 (1996), pp. 42–53.
- , *King of mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998).
- , *Cú Chulainn as Ailing Hero*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 190–198.
- , 'In Tenga Bithnua: From Apocalypse to Homily?', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 51–68.
- , *Single Ray of the Sun: Religious Speculation in Early Ireland* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999).
- , 'Varia I. *Ferp Cluche*', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 169–172.
- , 'Varia II. The Address to Fergus's Stone', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 183–187.
- , 'The Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts: *Immacaldam Choluim Chille 7 Ind Óclaig oc Carraic Eolairg* and *Immacaldam in Druad Brian 7 Inna Bahfhátho Febuil Ós Loch Fhebuil*', *Ériu* 52 (2002), pp. 25–52.
- , 'Remarks on Dating', in Carey, John, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 1–18.
- , 'The Encounter at the Ford: Warriors, Water, and Women', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 34 (2004), pp. 10–24.
- Carney, James, 'Nia Son of Lugna Fer Trí', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 2 (1940-1), pp. 187–197.
- , *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955).
- Catana, Leo, 'The Concept of "System of Philosophy": The Case of Jacob Brucker's Historiography of Philosophy', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 72–90.
- Cathasaigh, Tomás Ó, 'Cú Chulainn, the Poets and Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 291–302.
- Chadbourne, Kate, 'The Voices of Hounds: Heroic Dogs and Men in the Finn Ballads and Tales', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 28–41.

- Chadwick, Nora, 'Dreams in Early European Literature', in Carney, James and Greene, David, eds., *Celtic Studies: Essays in Memory of Angus Matheson* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968), pp. 33–50.
- Charles-Edwards, T. M., 'The Context and Uses of Literacy in Early Christian Ireland', in Pryce, Huw, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 62–82.
- , *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
- Charles-Edwards, T. M., 'A Contract between King and People in Early Medieval Ireland? Críth Gablach on Kingship', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994), pp. 107–119.
- Charles-Edwards, T. M., *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- , "'The Continuation of Bede", s.a. 750: High-kings, Kings of Tara, and "Bretwaldas"', in Smyth, Alfred P., ed., *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History, and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 137–145.
- , 'Dliger: Its Native and Latinate Usages', *Celtica* 24 (2003), pp. 65–78.
- , 'Early Irish Saints' Cults and Their Constituencies', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 79–102.
- , *The Chronicle of Ireland*, vol. 2 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).
- Charles-Edwards, T. M. and Kelly, Fergus, eds., *Bechbretha* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983).
- Charles-Edwards, T. M., Owen, Morfydd E. and Walters, D. B., eds., *Lawyers and Laymen: Studies in the History of Law Presented to Professor Dafydd Jenkins on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986).
- Charles-Edwards, Thomas, 'Tochmarc Étaíne: a Literal Interpretation', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 165–181.
- Cladis, Mark S., 'Modernity in Religion: A Response to Constatin Fasolt's "History and Religion in the Modern Age"', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 93–103.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen, 'Women Poets in Early Medieval Ireland: Stating the Case', in Meek, Christine and Simms, Katharine, eds., *'The Fragility of Her Sex': Medieval Irishwomen in Their European Context* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp. 43–72.
- Cohens, Esther, 'Law, Folklore, and Animal Lore', *Past and Present* 110 (1986), pp. 6–37.
- Collis, John, 'States without Centers?: The Middle La Tène Period in Temperate Europe', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 75–80.

- Collis, John, *The Celts: Origins, Myths, and Inventions* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003).
- Corthals, Johan, 'Ailbe's speech to Cithruad', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 34 (2004), pp. 1–9.
- Cosby, I. P. S. G., 'Christian Celtic Art and Uzbek Art—A Common Heritage?', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 2 (1989), pp. 13–40.
- Creighton, John, 'Visions of Power: Imagery and Symbols in Late Iron Age Britain', *Britannia* 26 (1995), pp. 285–301.
- Cross, J.E., 'On Hiberno-Latin Texts and Anglo-Saxon Writings', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 69–79.
- Cross, Tom Peete, *Motif-index of Early Irish Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1952).
- Crumley, Carole L., 'Building an Historical Ecology of Gaulish Polities', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 26–33.
- Cuilennáin, Cormac Úa, *Sanas Chormaic/Cormac's glossary*, ed. O'Donovan, John (Calcutta: The Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1868), With Notes and Indices by Whitley Stokes.
- , *Sanas Chormaic: An Old-Irish Glossary*, vol. 4, ed. Meyer, Kuno (Dublin [repr. Dyfed]: Hodges, Figgis, & Co. [repr. Llanerch Publishers], 1913 [repr. 1994]).
- Cunliffe, B. W., *The Ancient Celts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Cunningham, Bernadette, *The World of Geoffrey Keating* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).
- Curchin, Lenoard A., 'Literacy in the Roman Provinces: Qualitative and Quantitative Data from Central Spain', *The American Journal of Philology* 116 (1995), pp. 461–476.
- Dark, K. R., 'Back to the 'Dark Ages'? Terminology and Preconception in the archaeology of the fifth- to seventh-century Britain', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 193–200.
- Davidson, H. R. Ellis, *Myths and Symbols in Pagan Europe: Early Scandinavian and Celtic Religions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
- Davidson, Hilda Ellis, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Davies, Wendy, 'Land and Power in Early Medieval Wales', *Past and Present* 81 (1978), pp. 3–23.
- , 'Clerics as Rulers: Some Implications of the Terminology of Ecclesiastical Authority in Early Medieval Ireland', in Brooks, Nicholas, ed., *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 81–97.

- De Coninck, Lucas, 'The Composite Literal Gloss of the Double Psalter of St.-Ouen and the Contents of MS Vat. Pal. Lat. 68', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 81–93.
- De Paor, John, 'Adam's Grave, Adam's Soul and Our Souls, the Doctrine of the Three Letters, and Clm 6235', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 95–108.
- Dietler, Michael, "'Our Ancestors the Gauls': Archaeology, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Manipulation of Celtic Identity in Modern Europe', *American Anthropologist* 96 (1994), pp. 584–605.
- , 'Early "Celtic" socio-political relations: ideological representation and social competition in dynamic comparative perspective', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 64–71.
- Dillon, Myles, 'Laud Misc. 610', *Celtica* 5 (1960), pp. 64–76.
- , 'Laud Misc. 610 (cont.)', *Celtica* 6 (1963), pp. 135–155.
- , Mooney, Canice and Brún, Pádraig de, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Franciscan library, Killiney* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1969).
- Doi, Toshio, 'The Structure of Old Irish—Syntactical and Typological—', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 1 (1988), pp. 21–38.
- , 'Celtic Tradition and the Inscription of Banassac', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 4 (1991), pp. 73–85.
- Dolley, Michael, 'The Date of Some Glosses on Bretha Déin Chécht', *Celtica* 8 (1968), pp. 167–173.
- Domansak, Ewa, 'The Material Presence of the Past', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006), pp. 337–348.
- Donnelly, Seán, 'Crannga(i)l a Sound or Effect in Music', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 16–7.
- Dooley, Ann, 'Early Irish Literature and Contemporary Scholarly Disciplines', in Wall, Richard, ed., *Medieval and Modern Ireland* (Gerrods Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988), pp. 60–73.
- , 'The Poetic Self-fashioning of Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh', in *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 211–223.
- , *Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailnge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
- Dooley, Ann and Roe, Harry, eds., *Tales of the Elders of Ireland: A New Translation of Acallam na Senórach*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966 [repub. 2002]).

- Douglas, Mary, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Downham, Claire, 'The Historical Importance of Viking-Age Waterford', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 71–96.
- Drew, Katherine Fischer, ed., *The Laws of the Salian Franks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).
- Driessen, C. Michiel, 'Towards an Indo-European Term for "felt"', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 25–42.
- Duff-Cooper, Andrew, 'Women and Sovereignty in Balinese Lombok and Japan', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 301–330.
- Dumézil, Georges, *The Destiny of a King*, ed. Hildebeitel, Alf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).
- , *Mitra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty*, ed. Coltman, Derek (New York: Zone Books, 1990).
- Dumville, David, 'Language, Literature, and Law in Medieval Ireland: Questions of Transmission', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 9 (1985), pp. 91–98.
- Dumville, David N., 'The World of the Síd and the Attitude of the Narrator in *Táin Bó Fraích*', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 7 (1995), pp. 21–26.
- , 'Félire Óengusso: Problems of Dating a Monument of Old Irish', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002), pp. 19–48.
- , 'Mael Brigte mac Tornáin, pluralist coarb (†927)', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 97–116.
- Dunham, Sean B., 'Caesar's Perception of Gallic Social Structures', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 110–115.
- Eaton, John, *The Contemplative Face of Old Testament Wisdom: in the Context of World Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1989).
- Edel, Doris, *The Celtic West and Europe* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001).
- , 'Early Irish Queens and Royal Power: a First Reconnaissance', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 1–19.
- Enright, Michael J., *Iona, Tara, and Soissons* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1985).
- , 'Review Article: Medieval Ireland and the Continent', *Irish Historical Studies* 27 (1991), pp. 68–77.

- Enright, Michael J., 'Further Reflections on Royal Ordination in the *Vita Columbae*', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 20–35.
- Eska, Joseph F., 'Two Notes on Phonology in Continental Celtic', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 7 (1995), pp. 9–20.
- Esposito, Mario, 'The Latin Writers of Mediaeval Ireland', *Hermathena* 14:33 (1907), pp. 519–529.
- , 'The Latin Writers of Mediaeval Ireland – Supplement', *Hermathena* 15:35 (1909), pp. 353–364.
- , 'The Knowledge of Greek in Ireland during the Middle Ages', *Studies* 1 (1912), pp. 665–683.
- , 'On The Earliest Latin Life of St Brigid of Kildare', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Series C* 30 (1912), pp. 307–326.
- , 'A Bibliography of the Latin Writers of Mediaeval Ireland', *Studies* 2 (1913), pp. 495–521.
- , 'On the Pseudo-Augustinian Treatise "De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae"', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Series C* 35 (1919), pp. 189–207.
- , 'A Seventh-century Commentary on the Catholic Epistles', *Journal of Theological Studies* 21 (1919–20), pp. 316–318.
- , 'Notes on Latin Learning and Literature in Mediaeval Ireland, I', *Hermathena* 20:45 (1929), pp. 225–260.
- , 'Notes on Latin Learning and Literature in Mediaeval Ireland, II', *Hermathena* 22:47 (1932), pp. 253–271.
- , 'Notes on Latin Learning and Literature in Mediaeval Ireland, III', *Hermathena* 23:28 (1933), pp. 221–249.
- , 'Notes on Latin Learning and Literature in Mediaeval Ireland, IV', *Hermathena* 24:49 (1935), pp. 120–165.
- , 'Notes on Latin Learning and Literature in Mediaeval Ireland, V', *Hermathena* 25:50 (1937), pp. 139–183.
- , 'An Apocryphal "Book of Enoch and Elias" as a Possible Source of the *Nauigatio S. Brendani*', *Celtica* 5 (1960), pp. 192–206.
- Etchingham, Colmán, *Church Organization in Ireland A. D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999).
- Evans, D. Ellis, *Linguistics and Celtic Ethnogenesis*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 1–18.

- Evans, Dewi Wyn, 'The Learned Borrowings Claimed for *Táin Bó Fraích*', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 182–194.
- Falileyev, Alexander, 'Early Irish Céir "Bee's Wax"', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 27 (2002), pp. 68–77.
- Fasolt, Constantin, 'History and Religion in the Modern Age', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 10–26.
- Fischer, Franz, 'The Early Celts of West Central Europe: the Semantics of Social Structure', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 34–40.
- Flanagan, Marie Therese, 'Irish Church Reform in the Twelfth Century and Áed Ua Cáellaide, Bishop of Louth: an Italian dimension', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 94–104.
- Flower, Robin, 'Quidam Scotigena .i. Discipulus Boëthii or Boëthius and the Four Conditions of a Tale', *Ériu* 8 (1916), pp. 150–4.
- Ford, Patrick K., *Blackbirds, Cuckoos, and Infixed Pronouns: Another Context for Early Irish Nature Poetry*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 162–170.
- , 'Amazon Dot Choin', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 100–110.
- Forester, Peter and Toth, Alfred, 'Towards a Phylogenetic Chronology of Ancient Gaulish, Celtic, and Indo-European', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 100:15 (2003), pp. 9079–9084.
- Forte, Anthony J., 'Some Philological Observations on Codex Vindobonensis 940', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 109–115.
- Fracchia, Joseph and Lewontin, R. C., 'The Price of Metaphor', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 14–29.
- Fradenburg, Louise Olga, 'Sovereign Love: The Wedding of Margaret Tudor and James IV of Scotland', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 78–100.
- Fraga, José Carracedo, 'Irish Elements in the Pseudo-Isidorian Liber De Ortuv et Obitv Patriarcharvm', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 37–49.

- Franklin, Caroline, 'The Welsh American Dream: Iolo Morganwg, Robert Southey and the Madoc Legend', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 69–84.
- Franklin, Michael J., 'Sir William Jones, the Celtic Revival and the Oriental Renaissance', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 20–37.
- Fraser, James E., 'Adomnán, Cumméne, and the Picts', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17-18 (2003-4), pp. 183–198.
- Frazer, James George, *The Golden Bough: a Study in Comparative Religion* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890).
- Freccero, Carla, 'Marguerite de Navarre and the Politics of Maternal Sovereignty', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 132–149.
- Freeman, Philip, *The Galatian Language: A Comprehensive Survey of the Language of the Ancient Celts in Greco-Roman Asia Minor* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).
- , *War, Women, and Druids: Eyewitness Reports and Early Accounts of the Ancient Celts* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).
- , 'Who Were the Atecottis?', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 111–114.
- Gabriel, David, 'The Power of Women over the Man in Medieval Irish Prose Tales', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 7 (1995), pp. 61–88.
- García, Juan Luis, 'The Place Names of Ancient Hispania and Its Linguistic Layers', *Studia Celtica* 35 (2001), pp. 213–244.
- Garrett, Andrew, 'On the Prosodic Phonology of Ogam Irish', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 139–160.
- Gaskill, Howard, 'Introduction', in Gaskill, Howard, ed., *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), pp. 1–18.
- Gerriets, Marilyn, 'The Organization of Exchange in Early Christian Ireland', *The Journal of Economic History* 41 (1981), pp. 171–176.
- , 'Economy and Society: Clientship According to the Irish', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 6 (1983), pp. 43–61.
- , 'Money in Early Christian Ireland According to the Irish Laws', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 (1985), pp. 323–339.
- , 'The King as Judge in Early Ireland', *Celtica* 20 (1988), pp. 29–52.
- , 'Theft, Penitentials, and the Compilation of the Early Irish Laws', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 18–32.

- Gibson, D. Blair, 'Chiefdom's, Confederacies, and Statehood in Early Ireland', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chiefdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 116–128.
- Gillies, William, 'Varia I Early Irish líra, Scottish Gaelic liutha', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 253–256.
- Gray, Elizabeth A., 'The Warrior, the Poet, and the King: 'The Three Sins of the Warrior' and the Death of Cú Roí', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 74–90.
- Green, D. H., 'Orality and Reading: The State of Research in Medieval Studies', *Speculum* 65 (1990), pp. 257–280.
- Green, Miranda, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (London: Routledge, 1992).
- , *The Gods of the Celts* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1993).
- , *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors, Virgins, Mothers* (London: British Museum Press, 1995).
- , *The Celtic World* (London: Routledge, 1995).
- , *Exploring the World of the Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997).
- Gregory, Brad S., 'The Other Confessional History: On Secular Bias in the Study of Religion', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 132–149.
- Griffen, Toby D., 'Deciphering the Inscriptions on Jela 1 and 2', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 11–24.
- Grottanelli, Christiano, 'Yoked Horses, Twins, and the Powerful Lady: India, Greece, Ireland, and Elsewhere', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 11–24.
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, 'Presence Achieved in Language (With Special Attention Given to the Presence of the Past)', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006), pp. 317–327.
- Guy, Some, ed., *Ancient Laws of Ireland* (Dublin: A. Thom, 1865).
- Gwyndaf, Robin, 'Recording the Welsh Folk Narrative Tradition: Some Basic Principles of Research', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Yläne, Kari, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 91–104.
- Gwynn, E. J., 'Senbriathra Fithail', *Revue Celtique* 46 (1929), pp. 268–271.
- Gwynn, Edward, ed., *The Metrical Dindshenchas Part I-V*, vol. 8–12 (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co., 1908–1935).
- Hall, Dianne, *Women and the Church in Medieval Ireland, c. 1140–1540* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).

- Hamlin, Ann, 'Dungiven Priory and the Ó Catháin Family', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 118–137.
- Hamp, Eric, 'Dag(h)d(h)ae and His Relatives', in Sawick, Lea and Shalev, Donna, eds., *Donum Grammaticum: Studies in Latin and Celtic linguistics in Honour of Hannah Rosén*, vol. 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), pp. 163–169.
- Hamp, Eric P., 'Comments on Gaulish Ordinals', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 2 (1989), pp. 41–44.
- , 'Incidence of Gaulish Divine Names in -on', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 4 (1991), pp. 71–72.
- , 'Varia I. On Abstracts in -ia from locativals', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 33–47.
- , 'Reading Old Irish Writing: Making Complex Mechanisms Effortless—Well Somewhat', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 59–62.
- , 'Varia I. (h)uile', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 181–2.
- , 'Varia VI.', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 183–6.
- Hansen, Elaine Tuttle, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988).
- Harbison, Peter, 'The Extent of Royal Patronage of Irish High Crosses', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 6 (1994), pp. 77–106.
- Harvey, Anthony, 'Retrieving the Pronunciation of Early Insular Celtic Scribes: the Case of Dorbbene', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 48–63.
- , 'Varia I. Hiberno-Latin cuvula', *Ériu* 52 (2002), pp. 229–230.
- , 'Varia IV Some Terms for Tides in Celtic-Latin Literature', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 259–262.
- Heikkinen, Kanerva, 'The Hunt of the Magical Boar: in Search of Cultural Meanings in Medieval Celtic Literature', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Yläne, Kari, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 31–45.
- Henderson, Diana E., 'Elizabeth's Watchful Eye and George Peele's Gaze: Examining Female Power Beyond the Individual', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 150–169.
- Henderson, George, ed., *Fled Bricrend* (London: Irish Texts Society, 1899).
- Henderson, I. and Okasha, E., 'The Early Christian Inscribed and Carved Stones of Tullylease, Co. Cork', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1992), pp. 1–36.
- Henry, P. L., *The Early English and Celtic Lyric* (London: Queen's University, Belfast, 1966).
- , 'Interpreting Críth Gablach', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 36 (1978), pp. 54–62.
- , 'The Cruces of Audacht Morainn', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 39 (1982), pp. 33–53.

- Henry, P. L., 'A Note on the Brehon Law Tracts of Procedure and Status, Cóc Conara Fugill and Uraicecht Becc', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 49-50 (1997), pp. 310–318.
- Herbert, Máire, 'Goddess and King: The Scared Marriage in Early Ireland', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 264–275.
- Herbert, Máire, 'The Death of Muirchertach Mac Erca: A Twelfth-Century Tale', in Josephson, Folke, ed., *Celts and Vikings: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborgs: Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), pp. 27–40.
- , *Literary Sea-Voyages and Early Munster Hagiography*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 182–189.
- , 'The Life of Martin of Tours: a View from Twelfth-Century Ireland', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 76–84.
- Herbert, Máire, 'Becoming an Exile: Colum Cille in Middle-Irish Poetry', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 131–140.
- Herren, Michael W., 'The Pseudonymous Tradition in Hiberno-Latin: An Introduction', in O'Meara, J. J. and Naumann, B., eds., *Latin Script and Letters A.D. 400–900. Festschrift Presented to Ludwig Bieler on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 121–131.
- , 'Some New Light on the Life of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Series C* Series C 79 (1979), pp. 27–71.
- , 'On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance with Isidore of Seville', in James, E., ed., *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 243–250.
- , 'Classical and Secular Learning among the Irish before the Carolingian Renaissance', *Florilegium* 3 (1981), pp. 1–39.
- , 'Insular Latin *C(h)araxare (craxare)* and Its Derivatives', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 1 (1982), pp. 273–280.
- , 'A Nine-Century Poem for St. Gall's Feast Day and the 'Ad Sethum' of Columbanus', *Studi Medievali* 24 (1983), pp. 487–520.
- , 'Old Irish Lexical and Semantic Influence on Hiberno-Latin', in Ní Chatháin, Próinséas and Richter, Michael, eds., *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 197–209.
- , 'Eriugena's 'Aulæ Sidereæ', the 'Codex Aureus', and the Palatine Church of St. Mary at Compiègne', *Studi Medievali* 28 (1987), pp. 593–608.

- Herren, Michael W., 'The Stress Systems in Insular Latin Octosyllabic Verse', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 15 (1988), pp. 63–84.
- , 'St. Gall 48: A Copy of Eriugena's Glossed Greek Gospels', in Brent, G., Rädle, F. and Silagi, G., eds., *Tradition und Wertung. Festschrift für Franz Brunhölzl* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1989), pp. 97–105.
- , 'The Stress system of the Hiberno-Latin Hendecasyllable', *Celtica* 21 (1990), pp. 223–230.
- , 'Hiberno-Latin Lexical Sources in Harley 3376, A Latin-Old English Glossary', in Korhammer, M., ed., *Words, Texts, and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), pp. 371–379.
- , 'The Hiberno-Latin Poems in Virgil the Grammarian', in Holtz, Louis, ed., *De Terullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges Offerts à Jacques Fontaine* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1992), pp. 141–155.
- , 'An Early Irish Precursor of the 'Offiziendichtung' of the Carolingian and Ottonian Periods', *Euphrosyne* 22 (1994), pp. 291–300.
- Hillers, Barbara, 'Poet or Magician: Mac Mhuirich Mór in Oral Tradition', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 141–157.
- Hillgarth, J. N., 'Modes of Evangelization of Western Europe in the Seventh Century', in Ní Chatháin, Próinséas and Richter, Michael, eds., *Ireland and Christendom: The Bible and The Missions* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 311–331.
- Hirunuma, Toshio, 'Leptonic pala', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 3 (1990), pp. 61–68.
- Hogan, Daire and Osborough, W. N., eds., *Brehons, Serjeants, and Attorneys: Studies in the History of the Irish Legal Profession* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1991).
- Holland, Gary B., 'Relativization and Word Order in Old Irish and Vedic Sanskrit', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 24 (1996), pp. 323–331.
- Hollo, Kaarina, *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait and its Place in the Irish Literary and Oral Narrative Traditions: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, Translation, Bibliography and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005).
- , 'The Ulster Cycle, the Law-tracts, and the Medieval Court: The Depiction of Senchae mac Ailella, Aurlabraid Ulad', *Aiste* 1 (2007), pp. 170–180.
- Howe, Stephen, 'The Politics of Historical "Revisionism": Comparing Ireland and Israel/Palestine', *Past and Present* 168 (2000), pp. 227–253.
- Howlett, D. R., *The Celtic Latin Tradition of Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995).
- Howlett, David, 'Numerical Punctilio in Patrick's Confessio', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17-18 (2003-4), pp. 150–153.

- Howlett, David, 'The Prologue to the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17-18 (2003-4), pp. 144-149.
- Hristova, Daniela, 'Absolute Constructions in Slavic: Case Diversity and Originality', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 297-318.
- Hudson, Benjamin, 'The Practical Hero', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 151-164.
- Hughes, J. Donald, 'Dream Interpretation in Ancient Civilizations', *Dreaming* 10 (2000), pp. 7-18.
- Hughes, Kathleen, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London: Methuen, 1966).
- , 'Evidence for Contacts between the Churches of the Irish and the English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age', in Clemoes, P. and Hughes, K., eds., *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 49-67.
- , *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1972).
- Hughson, Iriene I., *Pictish Horses and Pictish Society*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 211-221.
- Hull, Vernam, 'Bretha im Gatta', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 25 (1956), pp. 211-225.
- , 'Cáin Domnaig', *Ériu* 20 (1966), pp. 151-177.
- Innes, Matthew, 'Memory, Orality, and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society', *Past and Present* 158 (1998), pp. 2-36.
- Ireland, Colin, 'Aldfrith of Northumbria and the Irish Genealogies', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 64-78.
- , *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).
- , 'The Poets Cædmon and Colmán mac Lénéni: The Anglo-Saxon Layman and the Irish Professional', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 172-182.
- Isaac, G. R., 'Prospects in Old Irish Syntax', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 53 (2003), pp. 181-97.
- , 'Varia I. Some Old Irish Etymologies, and Some Conclusions Drawn from Them', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 151-156.

- Isaac, G. R., 'The Chronology of the Development of Brittonic Stops and the Spirant Mutation', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 8 (2004), pp. 49–86.
- Jackson, Kenneth, *Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).
- , *Early Welsh Gnostic Poems* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1935).
- James, Simon, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1999).
- Jasanoff, Jay, Melchert, Craig and Oliver, Lisi, eds., *Mír Curad: Studies in Honor of Calvert Watkins* (Innsbruck: Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 1998).
- Jaski, Bart, 'Marriage Laws in Ireland and on the Continent in the Early Middle Ages', in Meek, Christine and Simms, Katharine, eds., *'The Fragility of Her Sex': Medieval Irishwomen in Their European Context* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp. 16–42.
- , *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).
- Jedrej, M. C., 'Rain Makers, Women, and Sovereignty in the Sahel and East Africa', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 290–300.
- Johnson, Toni O'Brien, 'Medieval Irish Poetics: Linguistic Interaction and Audience', in Wall, Richard, ed., *Medieval and Modern Ireland* (Gerrods Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988), pp. 108–122.
- Johnston, Elva, 'The Salvation of the Individual and the Salvation of Society in Siaburcharpat Con Culaind', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *The Individual in Celtic Literatures* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 109–125.
- Kavanagh, Anne K., 'The Ps.-Jerome's Expositio IV Euangeliorum', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 125–131.
- Kavanagh, Séamus and Wodtke, Dagmar S., eds., *A lexicon of the Old Irish glosses in the Würzburg manuscript of the Epistles of St Paul* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001).
- Kazzazi, Kerstin, 'Of Brides and Goddesses. Determining the Semantic Differences between Terms for a Young Woman in the Rveda', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 43–60.
- Kelly, Fergus, *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976).
- , 'An Old-Irish Text on Court Procedure', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986), pp. 74–106.
- , *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988).
- , *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1997).

- Kelly, Henry Ansgear, 'Medieval Heroics without Heroes or Epics', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 226–239.
- Kelly, J. F., 'The Devil in Hiberno-Latin Exegesis of the Early Middle Ages', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 133–144.
- Kelly, Patrica, 'A Fragment of a Latin Grammar', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 243–250.
- Kelsall, Malcolm, 'Luttrell of Arran and the Romantic Invention of Ireland', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 182–195.
- Ketelaar, James E., 'The Non-modern Confronts the Modern: Dating the Buddha in Japan', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 62–79.
- Kidd, Colin, 'Gaelic Antiquity and National Identity in Enlightenment Ireland and Scotland', *English Historical Review* 109 (1994), pp. 1197–1214.
- Kirby, D. P., 'Cuthbert, Boisil of Melrose, and the Northumbrian Priest Ecgberht: Some Historical and Hagiographical Connection', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 48–53.
- Knott, Eleanor, ed., *The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn*, vol. 2 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1922).
- , *Irish Syllabic Poetry 1200-1600*, 2nd edition (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957).
- Labert, Pierre-Yves, 'Varia III. Gaulish souxtu: Early Irish suacht', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 189–192.
- Laing, Lloyd and Jennifer, *Celtic Britain and Ireland, AD 200-800: The Myth of the Dark Ages* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990).
- Larrington, Carolyne, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnomie Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
- Larson, Heather Feldmeth, 'The Veiled Poet: Lídain and Cuirithir and the Role of the Woman-Poet', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 263–268.
- Law, Vivien, *The Insular Latin Grammarians* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1982).
- , *Wisdom, Authority, and Grammar in the Seventh Century: Decoding Virgilius Maro Grammaticus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

- Le Duc, Gwenaél, *The Colonisation of Brittany from Britain: New Approaches and Questions*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 133–151.
- Leerssen, Joep, 'Wildness, Wilderness, and Ireland: Medieval and Early-Modern Patterns in the Demarcation of Civility', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (1995), pp. 25–39.
- Lehmann, Ruth P. M., 'Irish Patterns of Poetry', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 5 (1992), pp. 1–6.
- Lincoln, Bruce, 'Rewriting the German War God: Georges Dumézil, Politics, and Scholarship in the Late 1930s', *History of Religions* 37:3 (Feb. 1998), pp. 187–208.
- Lindeman, Fredrik Otto, 'On the Origin of the Present Subjunctive of the Substantive Verb in Old Irish', in Jasanoff, Jay, Melchert, H. Craig and Oliver, Lisi, eds., *Mír Curad: Studies in Honor of Calvert Watkins* (Innsbruck: Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 1998), pp. 405–412.
- , 'Varia V. On a Possible Celto-Germanic Etymological Correspondence', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 179–182.
- , 'VI. On the Origin of the Celto-Germanic Etymon *nent-', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 183–182.
- Littleton, C. Scott, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 2nd edition (London: University of California Press, 1966).
- Löfstedt, Bengt, 'Notes on the Latin of De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae of Augustinus Hibernicus', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 145–150.
- Lyle, Emily, *Archaic Cosmos: Polarity, Space, and Time* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990).
- , 'A Line of Queens as the Pivot of Cosmology', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 276–289.
- , 'Broadening the Perspective on Dumézil's Three Functions', in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 100–108.
- , 'Which Triad? A Critique and Development of Dumézil's Tripartite Structure', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 221 (2004), pp. 5–21.
- Lynch, John, *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. 2, ed. Kelly, Matthew (Dublin: NP, 1850).
- Mac Airt, Seán and Mac Niocaill, Gearóid, eds., *The Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951).
- , *The Annals of Ulster (to 1131 AD)* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983).
- Mac Cana, Proinsias, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980).

- Mac Cana, Proinsias, *Croesaniaid and Crosáin: Literary Outsiders*, in Jenkins, Geraint H., ed., *Wales and the Welsh 2000: Proceedings of the Millennium Conference of the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies*, University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (Aberystwyth: University of Wales, 2001), pp. 19–39.
- , ‘The Ingen Moel’, *Ériu* 52 (2002), pp. 217–28.
- , ‘Notes on the Legend of Louernios’, in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 138–144.
- , ‘Varia V.’, *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 179–82.
- , ‘Praise Poetry in Ireland before the Normans’, *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 11–40.
- Mac Cárthaigh, Eion, ‘Dia Libh, A Uaisle Éireann (1641)’, *Ériu* 52:89 (2002), pp. 89–122.
- Mac Eoin, Gearóid, ‘Satire in Middle Irish Literature’, in Josephson, Folke, ed., *Celts and Vikings: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborgs: Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), pp. 9–26.
- , ‘The Four Names of St. Patrick’, in *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 300–311.
- Mac Mathúna, Liam, ‘The Scope of Landscape: Some Contrasts and Realignment within the Topographical Vocabulary of Early Irish’, *Studia Celtica Japonica* 6 (1994), pp. 37–52.
- , ‘The Vikings in Ireland: Contemporary Reaction and Cultural Legacy’, in Josephson, Folke, ed., *Celts and Vikings: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborgs: Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), pp. 41–65.
- , ‘Lexical and Literary Aspects of “Heart” in Irish’, *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 1–18.
- , ‘Continuity and Change in Early Irish Words for ‘Plain’: Exploring Narrative Text and Place-Name Divergence’, *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 149–170.
- Mac Mathúna, Séamus, ‘Hvítramannaland’, in Josephson, Folke, ed., *Celts and Vikings: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborgs: Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), pp. 211–224.
- Mac Niocaill, Gearóid, ‘Tír Cumaile’, *Ériu* 22 (1971), pp. 81–86.
- , *The Medieval Irish Annals* (Dublin: Dublin Historical Association, 1975).
- Mac Niocall, Gearóid, ‘Aspects of Irish Law in the Late Thirteenth Century’, *Historical Studies* 10 (1976), pp. 25–42.
- Macalister, R. A. S., ed., *Corpus Inscriptionum Celticarum*, vol. 2 (Dublin: NP, 1949).
- Macalister, R. A. Stewart, ed., *Lebor Gabhála Érenn: the Book of the Taking of Ireland*, vol. 5 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1940).

- MacGinty, Gerard, 'The Pentateuch of the Reference Bible: The Problem Concerning Sources', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 163–177.
- MacInnes, John, 'The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry and Its Historical Background', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 50 (1976–78), pp. 435–498.
- MacKinnon, Kenneth, 'Reversing Language Shift', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 8 (2004), pp. 109–32.
- MacLeod, Sharon Paice, 'Éisce, Gáeth ocus Muir: Three Notes on Archaic Celtic Cosmology', *Cosmos* 18 (2002), pp. 103–120.
- MacPherson, James, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. Gaskill, Howard (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996).
- Maier, Bernhard, Sugere mammellas: *A Pagan Irish Custom and its Affinities*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 152–161.
- Markus, R. A., *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Martin, Lawrence T., 'The Catechesis Veronensis', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 151–161.
- Matasović, Ranko, 'Old Irish Dative Singular of Neuter n-Stems', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 8 (1996), pp. 59–64.
- McCarthy, Daniel, 'Topographical Characteristics of the Vita Prima and Vita Cogitosi Sanctae Brigitae', *Studia Celtica* 35 (2001), pp. 245–70.
- McCone, Kim, 'Dubthach Maccu Lugair and a Matter of Life and Death in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 5 (1986), pp. 1–35.
- , *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 1990).
- , 'The PIE Stops and Syllabic Nasals in Celtic', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 4 (1991), pp. 37–70.
- , *The Early Irish Verb*, 2nd edition (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1997).
- , *Echtrae Chonnlaí and the Beginnings of Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, and Bibliography and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: Kim McCone, 2000).
- , *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader: Including an Introduction to Middle Irish* (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005).

- McCone, Kim and Simms, Kathrine, eds., *Progress in Medieval Irish Studies* (Maynooth: St. Patrick's College, 1996).
- McDonald, Maryon, 'Celtic Ethnic Kinship and the Problem of Being English', *Current Anthropology* 27 (1986), pp. 333–347.
- McGowan, K. Megan, 'The Four Masters and the Governance of Ireland in the Middle Ages', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 1–42.
- McGowan, Megan, 'Royal Succession in Earlier Medieval Ireland: the Fiction of Tanistry', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17-18 (2003-4), pp. 357–381.
- McIntire, C. T., 'Transcending Dichotomies in History and Religion', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 80–92.
- McKee, Helen Simpson, 'Breton Manuscripts of Biblical and Hiberno-Latin Texts', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 275–290.
- McKenna, Catherine, 'Apotheosis and Evanescence: The Fortunes of Saint Brigit in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *The Individual in Celtic Literatures* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 74–108.
- , 'Between Two Worlds: Saint Brigit and Pre-Christian Religion in the Vita Prima', in —, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 66–74.
- , 'Vision and Revision, Iteration and Reiteration, in Aislinge Meic Con Glinne', in —, and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 269–282.
- McKenna, Lambert, ed., *The Book of O'Hara: Leabhar Í Eadhra* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951).
- McLaughlin, Roisin, 'Metres in *Mittelirische Verslehren III*', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 119–136.
- McLeod, Neil, 'The Two *Fer Midboth* and Their Evidence in Court', *Ériu* 33 (1982), pp. 59–63.
- , 'Interpreting Early Irish Law: Status and Currency, Part I', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 41 (1986), pp. 46–65.
- , 'Interpreting Early Irish Law: Status and Currency, Part II', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 42 (1987), pp. 41–115.
- , *Early Irish Contract Law* (Sydney: Centre for Celtic Studies, 1992).
- , 'Irish Law: Significant Numbers and the Law of Status', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 9 (1995), pp. 156–166.
- , 'Assault and Attempted Murder in Brehon Law', *Irish Jurist* 33 (1998), pp. 351–391.
- , 'Kinship', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 1–22.

- McLeod, Neil, 'Compensation for Fingers and Teeth in Early Irish Law', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 16 (2002), pp. 344–359.
- , 'Dí Ércib Fola', *Ériu* 52 (2002), pp. 123–216.
- McLeod, Wilson, 'The Rhetorical Geography of Late Medieval Irish Chronicles', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 40 (2002), pp. 57–68.
- McManus, Damian, *A Guide to Ogam* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1991).
- , 'Varia II. IGT citations; further identifications', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 145–146.
- , 'Varia III. Miscellanea on Bardic Poetry: Metre, Language, and Style', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 147–166.
- McNamara, Martin, 'The Affiliations and Origins of the Catechesis Celtica: An Ongoing Quest', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 179–203.
- , 'The Biblical Text of Sankt Gallen Stfthbibliothek Codex 51: with Special Reference to the Fourth Gospel', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 262–267.
- Meek, Donald E., 'Táin Bó Fraích and Other 'Fráech' Texts: a Study in Thematic Relationships Part I', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 7 (1984), pp. 1–38.
- , 'Táin Bó Fraích and Other 'Fráech' Texts: a Study in Thematic Relationships Part II', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 8 (1984), pp. 65–86.
- , 'The Gaelic Ballads of Scotland: Creativity and Adaption', in Gaskill, Howard, ed., *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), pp. 19–48.
- , *The Quest for Celtic Christianity* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 2000).
- Megaw, Ruth and Vincent, *Celtic Connections Past and Present: Celtic Ethnicity Ancient and Modern*, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 19–81.
- Meid, Wolfgang, ed., *Táin Bó Fraích* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967 [rev. 1974, repr. 1994]).
- Melia, Daniel F., 'On the Form and Function of the 'Old-Irish Verse' in the Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus – How Patrick Ford Opened My Eyes to an Important Aspect of Early Irish Poetry and Some Conclusions that I have Come to As A Result', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 283–290.
- Melia, Daniel Fredrick, 'The Irish Saint as Shaman', *Pacific Coast Philology* 18 (1983), pp. 37–42.

- Menner, Robert J., *The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1941).
- Meyer, Kuno, ed., *Cáin Adamnáin: an Old-Irish Treatise on the Law of Adamnan*, vol. 12 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).
- , 'Learning in Ancient Ireland', *Irish Review* 2 (1912), pp. 449–459.
- , 'Mitteilungen aus Irischen Handschriften', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 8 (1912), pp. 102–120.
- Milizia, Paolo, 'Proto-Indo-European Nasal Infixation Rule', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 337–360.
- Miller, Dean A., 'Byzantine Sovereignty and Feminine Potencies', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 250–263.
- , 'Defining and Expanding the Indo-European Vater-Shones-Kampf', in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 109–130.
- , 'King and Warrior in Ritual Time', *Cosmos* 18 (2002), pp. 159–172.
- Miller, Molly, 'The Chronological Structure of the Sixth Age in the Rawlinson Fragment of the "Irish World-Chronicle"', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 79–111.
- Moisl, Hermann and Hamann, Stefanie, 'A Frankish Aristocrat at the Battle of Mag Roth', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 36–47.
- Monette, Connell, 'Indo-European Elements in Celtic and Indo-Iranian Epic Traditions: The Trial of Champions in the Tá Bó Cúailnge and the Shahnámeh', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 61–78.
- Moore, Dafydd R., 'The Critical Response to Ossian's Romantic Bequest', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 38–53.
- Morgan, Hiram, 'The Island Defenders: Humanist Patriots in Early Modern Iceland and Ireland', in Hálfðanarson, Gudmunður and Isaacs, Anne Kathrine, eds., *Nations and Nationalities in Historical Perspective* (Pisa: University of Pisa, 2001), pp. 223–243.
- Mori, Setsuko, 'St. Patrick and His 'Confession'', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 2 (1989), pp. 1–12.
- Moses, A. Dirk, 'Hayden White, Traumatic Nationalism, and the Public Role of History', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 311–332.
- , 'The Public Relevance of Historical Studies: a Rejoinder to Hayden White', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 339–347.
- Murphy, Gerard, ed., *Duanaire Finn*, vol. 3 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1908–1953).

- Murphy, Gerard, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: The Cultural Relations Committee, 1955).
- , *Early Irish lyrics, eighth to twelfth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956).
- , *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1961).
- Murphy, Roland E., *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996).
- Murray, Kevin, 'Varia VII. at(t)baí'ec at(t)baí', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 185–187.
- , 'Baile in Scáil and Baile Bricin', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002), pp. 49–56.
- Myrick, Leslie, *From the 'De Excidio Troiae Historia' to the 'Togail Troí': Literary-Cultural Synthesis in a Medieval Irish Adaptation of Dare's Troy Tale* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1993).
- Nagy, Joseph Falaky, 'Orality in Medieval Irish Narrative: An Overview', *Oral Tradition* 1/2 (1986), pp. 272–301.
- Nagy, Joseph Falaky, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).
- , *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997).
- , 'Observations on the Ossianesque in Medieval Irish Literature and Modern Irish Folklore', *Journal of American Folklore* 114 (2001), pp. 436–446.
- , *The Poetics of Absence in Celtic Tradition* (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2003).
- , 'The Significance of the Duanaire Finn', in Carey, John, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 39–50.
- Nash, Daphne, 'Reconstructing Posedionios' Celtic Ethnography: Some Considerations', *Britannia* 7 (1976), pp. 111–126.
- Nelson, Janet, 'Legislation and Consensus in the Reign of Charles the Bald', in Wormald, Patrick, Bullough, Donald and Collins, Roger, eds., *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1983), pp. 202–227.
- Neusner, Jacob, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).
- Newman, Conor, 'Reflections on the Making of a 'Royal Site' in Early Ireland', *World Archaeology* 30 (1998), pp. 127–141.
- Ní C. Dobs, Máighréad, 'From the Book of Fermoy', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 20 (1936), pp. 161–184.

- Ní Chatháin, Próinséas and Richter, Michael, eds., *Ireland and Europe in the early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).
- Ní Dhonnchadha, Máirí, 'The Guarantor List of Cáin Adomnán, 697', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 1 (1982), pp. 178–215.
- Ní Dhonnchadha, Máirín, 'An Address to a Student of Law', in Ó Corráin, Donnchadh, Breatnach, Liam and McCone, Kim, eds., *Sages, Saints, and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), pp. 159–177.
- Ní Mhaonaigh, Máire, 'Tales of Three Gormlaiths in Medieval Irish Literature', *Ériu* 52 (2002), pp. 1–24.
- Ní Úrdail, Meidhbhí, 'Two Poems Attributed to Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 19–52.
- Nicholls, K. W., *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003).
- Nicholson, Andrew, 'Byron and the "Ariosto of the North"', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 130–150.
- Niepokuj, Mary, 'Requests for a Hearing in Norse and Other Indo-European Languages', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 25 (1997), pp. 49–78.
- Norkus, Zenonas, 'Mechanisms as Miracle Makers? The Rise and Inconsistencies of the "Mechanismic Approach" in Social Science and History', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 348–372.
- Ó Briain, Máirtín, 'Laoi Chlainn gann Cheann': Oisín's Headless Bride in Gaelic Tradition, in Black, Ronald, Gillies, William and Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, eds., *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, International Congress of Celtic Studies (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 233–250.
- , 'Duanaire Finn XXII: Goll and the Champion's Portion', in Carey, John, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 51–78.
- Ó Caithnia, Liam, *Apalóga na bhfilí, 1200–1650* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1984).
- Ó Carroll, Michael, 'Our Lady in Early Medieval Ireland', in Smyth, Alfred P., ed., *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archeology, History, and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 178–181.
- Ó Catháin, Séamus, 'Brigit and the Seven Bears: Some Nordic-Celtic Parallels', in Josephson, Folke, ed., *Celts and Vikings: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborgs: Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), pp. 253–292.
- Ó Cathasaigh, Tomás, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977).

- Ó Cathasaigh, Tomás, 'The Threefold Death in Early Irish Sources', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 6 (1994), pp. 53–76.
- , 'The Oldest Story of the Laigin: Observations on Orgain Denna Ríg', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002), pp. 1–18.
- , 'Sound and Sense in Cath Almaine', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 41–48.
- Ó Concheanainn, Tomás, 'The Book of Ballymote', *Celtica* 14 (1981), pp. 15–25.
- , 'The Three Forms of *Dinnshenchas Éirenn*', *Journal of Celtic Studies* 3 (1981/2), pp. 88–101.
- , 'Scríobhaithe Leacáin Mhic Fhir Bhrisigh', *Celtica* 19 (1987), pp. 141–169.
- Ó Corráin, Ailbhe, 'Spatial Perception and the Development of Grammatical Structures in Irish', in Josephson, Folke, ed., *Celts and Vikings: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborgs: Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), pp. 89–102.
- Ó Corráin, Donnchadh, 'Irish Vernacular Law and the Old Testament', in Richter, Michael and Ní Chatháin, Próinséas, eds., *Ireland and Christendom: the Bible and the Missions* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 284–310.
- , 'Creating the Past: The Early Irish Genealogical Tradition', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 12 (1998), pp. 177–208.
- , 'Synodus II Patricii and Vernacular Law', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 16 (2002), pp. 335–343.
- Ó Corráin, Donnchadh, Breatnach, Liam and Breen, Aidan, 'The Laws of the Irish', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984), pp. 382–438.
- Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, 'Early Irish Annals from Easter Tables: A Case Restated', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 2 (1983), pp. 74–86.
- , *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1995).
- , 'Three Weddings and a Funeral: Rewriting Irish Political History in the Tenth Century', in Smyth, Alfred P., ed., *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archeology, History, and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 212–224.
- , 'New Old Irish Gloss in a Munich Manuscript', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002), pp. 75–77.
- , *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).
- Ó Cuív, Brian, 'Observations on the Book of Lismore', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Series C* 83 (1983), pp. 269–292.
- Ó Cuív, Brian, ed., *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001).

- Ó Dónaill, Caoimhín, ed., *Talland Étair: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Textual Notes, Bibliography, and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2005).
- Ó Duinn, Seán, *Forbhais Drom Dámhghaire* (Cork: Cork Mercier Press, 1992).
- Ó Gealbháin, Séamus, 'The Double Article and Related Features of Genitive Syntax in Old Irish and Middle Welsh', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 119–44.
- Ó Háinle, Cathal, 'The Pater Noster in Irish: Reformation Texts to c. 1650', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 145–64.
- Ó hAodha, Donncha, 'The Voyage of Snédgus and Mac Ríagla', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Ylänne, Krisi, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 17–30.
- Ó hÓgáin, Dáithí, 'The River Boyne and the Ancient Seer', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 6 (1994), pp. 13–35.
- , *The Lore of Ireland: An Encyclopaedia of Myth, Legend, and Romance* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006).
- Ó hUiginn, Ruairí, 'Aspects of Clause Subordination in the Celtic Languages', in Josephson, Folke, ed., *Celts and Vikings: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborgs: Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), pp. 69–88.
- , 'Celtic Twilights and Political Reality', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Ylänne, Krisi, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 105–118.
- , 'Varia II. Embedded Imperative Clauses', *Ériu* 52 (2002), pp. 231–34.
- Ó hUiginn, Ruairí, 'Duanaire Finn: Patron and Text', in Carey, John, ed., *Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003), pp. 79–106.
- Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, 'Processes in Nasalization and Related Issues', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 109–32.
- , 'Varia II. A Possible Internal Source for Scottish Gaelic plural -an', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 157–62.
- , 'Varia III. Vocalic Variation in air-, aur-', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 163–70.
- , 'Varia IV', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 171–8.
- , 'A Gaulish-Gaelic Correspondence: S(o)uxt- and Suac(hd)dan', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 103–118.
- Ó Muraíle, Nollaig, *The Celebrated Antiquary Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh (c. 1600–1671): His Lineage, Life, and Learning* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1996).

- Ó Murchadha, Diarmuid, 'Carman, Site of the Óenach Carmain: a Proposed Location', *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2002), pp. 57–70.
- Ó Néill, Pádraig, 'The Old-Irish Glosses of the Prima Manus in Würzburg, m.p.th.f.12: text and context', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 230–242.
- , 'Irish Glosses in a Twelfth-Century Copy of Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae*', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 1–18.
- Ó Néill, Pádraig P., 'Irish Observance of the Three Lents and the Date of the St. Gall Priscian (MS 904)', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 159–180.
- Ó Néill, Pádraig P. and Dumville, David N., eds., *Cáin Adomnáin and Canones Adomnani* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, 2003).
- Ó Riain, P., 'A Misunderstood Annal: A Hitherto Unnoticed Cáin', *Celtica* 21 (1990), pp. 561–566.
- Ó Riain, Pádraig, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985).
- , 'Adamnán's Age at Death: Fact or Symbol', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 5 (1992), pp. 7–18.
- O'Brien, M. A., ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976).
- O'Brien, Steven, 'Dioscuric Elements in Celtic and Germanic Mythology', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 10 (1982), pp. 117–36.
- O'Donovan, John, *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616. Edited from MSS in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy and of Trinity College Dublin with a translation and copious notes*, vol. 7 (Dublin: Hodges & Smith, 1848–51).
- Ohkuma, Keishiro, 'Kingship in Ancient Ireland', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 14 (1986), pp. 231–245.
- O'Leary, Aideen, 'Mog Ruith and Apocalypticism in Eleventh-Century Ireland', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *The Individual in Celtic Literatures* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 51–60.
- O'Loughlin, Thomas, 'Marriage and Sexuality in the *Hibernensis*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 11 (1997), pp. 188–206.
- , 'Tradition and Exegesis in the Eighth Century: The Use of Patristic Sources in Early Medieval Scriptural Commentaries', in —, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 217–239.

- O'Loughlin, Thomas, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World and God in Early Irish Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2000).
- , 'The Diffusion of Adombán's *De Locis Sanctis* in the Medieval Period', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 93–106.
- , *Adomnán at Birr, 697 AD* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001).
- , 'A Celtic Theology': Some Awkward Questions and Observations', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 49–65.
- , 'Perceiving Palestine in Early Christian Ireland: Martyrium, Exeetical Key, Relic, and Liturgical Space', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 125–138.
- O'Neill, Michael, 'Contemporary Northern Irish Poets and Romantic Poetry', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 196–209.
- O'Rahilly, Cecile, ed., *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976 [reprint 2003]).
- O'Rahilly, T. F., *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946).
- Ordower, Henry, 'Exploring the Literary Function of Law and Litigation in "Njal's Saga"', *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 3 (1991), pp. 41–61.
- Osborough, W. N., 'Roman Law in Ireland', *Irish Jurist* 25-27 (1990-1992), pp. 212–268.
- O'Sullivan, William, 'The Book of Domhnaill Ó Duibhdábhoireann, Provenance and Codicology', *Celtica* 23 (1999), pp. 276–299.
- Parsons, John Carmi, 'Ritual and Symbol in English Medieval Queenship to 1500', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 60–77.
- Patterson, Nerys, 'Brehon Law in Late Medieval Ireland: "Antiquarian and Obsolete" or "Traditional and Functional"?', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 17 (1989), pp. 43–63.
- , 'Gaelic Law and the Tudor Conquest of Ireland: The Social Background of the Sixteenth-Century Recensions of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Irish Historical Studies* 27 (1991), pp. 193–215.
- , *Cattle Lords & Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland* (London: University of Notre Dame, 1994).
- Patterson, Nerys Thomas, 'Clans Are Not Primordial: Pre-Viking Irish Society and the Modelling of Pre-Roman Societies in Northern Europe', in Arnold, Bettina and Gibson, D. Blair, eds., *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 129–136.

- Patton, Laurie L., 'Space and Time in the "Immacallam in dá Thuarad"', *Folklore* 103 (1992), pp. 92–102.
- Pedersen, Holger, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909-13).
- Peters, Rik, 'Actes de présence: Presence in Fascist Political Culture', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006), pp. 362–374.
- Petterson, Gerd, *Finn and the Fíán: Reflections of Ancient Celtic Myth and Institutions in Early and Medieval Ireland* (Göteborg: Göteborg Institutionen för Religionsvetenskap, Göteborgs Universitet, 1999).
- Picard, Jean-Michel, 'Early Contacts between Ireland and Normandy: the Cult of Irish Saints in Normandy before the Conquest', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 85–93.
- , 'Bede and Irish Scholarship: Scientific Treatises and Grammars', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 139–148.
- Piccini, Angela, 'Filming through the Mists of Time: Celtic Constructions and the Documentary', *Current Anthropology* 37:1 (1996), pp. S87–S111.
- Pietiläinen, Petri, 'Forging a Monumental History into a Personal Story: Neil Jordan's Fiction', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Yläne, Kari, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 119–134.
- Pitcock, Murray G. H., 'Scott and the British Tourist', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 151–166.
- Polomé, Edgar C., 'Celto-Germanic Isoglosses (Revisited)', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 11 (1983), pp. 281–98.
- , 'Indo-European and Non-Indo-European Elements in Germanic Myth and Religion', in —, ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 131–146.
- Pontfarcy, Yolande de, 'The Sovereignty of Paeonia', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 145–150.
- Poppe, Erich, 'Scéla Muicce Meic Da Thó Revisited', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 9 (1997), pp. 1–9.
- , 'Varia II. King Ahab, Boia, Mac Da Thó and Ailill', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 173–176.
- , 'Personal names and an Insular Tradition of Pseudo-Dares', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 53–60.
- , 'A Virgilian Model for Lúirech Thredúalach', *Ériu* 54 (2005), pp. 171–177.

- Puhvel, Jann, 'After Dumézil, What?', in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 147–155.
- Puhvel, Martin, 'The Deicidal Otherworld Weapon in Celtic and Germanic Mythic Tradition', *Folklore* 83 (1972), pp. 210–219.
- , *Beowulf and Celtic Tradition* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1979).
- Punter, David, 'Blake and Gwendolen: Territory, Periphery and the Proper Name', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 54–68.
- Quin, E. G., ed., *Dictionary of the Irish Language: Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials Compact Edition* (Royal Irish Academy, 1983).
- Quintela, Marco V. García and Estévez, Manuel Santos, 'From Rock Carvings to Celtic Weltanschauung in A Ferradura: A Sanctuary of the Hillfort Culture in Northwest Spain', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 319–366.
- Radner, Joan Newlon, ed., *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978).
- Rance, Philip, 'Attacotti, Deisi and Magnus Maximus: the Case for Irish Federates in Late Roman Britain', *Britannia* 32 (2001), pp. 243–270.
- Rankin, David, *Celts and the Classical World* (New York: Routledge, 1987).
- Reeves, W., 'St. Beretchert of Tullylease', *Ulster Journal of Archeology* 6 (1858), pp. 267–275.
- Rhŷs, Sir John, *Lectures on Welsh Philology* (London: Trübner, 1877).
- Richards, Jeffery, *Consul of God: the Life and Times of Gregory the Great* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).
- Richardson, Hilary, 'The Cross Triumphant: High Crosses in Ireland', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 112–117.
- Richter, Michael, 'St. Gallen and the Irish in the Early Middle Ages', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 65–75.
- Rittmueller, Jean, 'Sources of the Liber Questionum in Euangeliis; the Redactor's Adaptation of Jerome's Commentarius in Matheum and Augustine's De Sermone Domini in Monte', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 241–273.
- Roberts, Sara Elin, 'Plaints in Medieval Welsh Law', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 219–262.

- Ronan, Patricia, 'Old Irish Consonants in Pre- and Functional Grammar', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 8 (2004), pp. 133–48.
- Rose, H. J., 'Review of Georges Dumézil, *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus and Servius et la Fortune*', *Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947), p. 183.
- , 'Review of Georges Dumézil, *Rituels indo-européens à Rome*', *Classical Review* 69 (1955), pp. 307–308.
- , *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1959).
- Runciman, W. G., 'Culture Does Evolve', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 1–13.
- , 'Rejoinder to Fracchia and Lewontin', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 30–41.
- Runia, Eelco, 'Spots of Time', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 45 (2006), pp. 305–316.
- Russell, Paul, 'The Sounds of a Silence: The Growth of Cormac's Glossary', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 15 (1988), pp. 1–30.
- Ryan, Kathleen, 'Holes and Flaws in Medieval Irish Manuscripts', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 6-7 (1987-88), pp. 243–64.
- Ryan, Michael, 'Furrows and Browes: Some Archaeological Thoughts on Agriculture and Population in Early Medieval Ireland', in Smyth, Alfred P., ed., *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History, and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 30–36.
- Sayers, William, 'Fergus and the Cosmogonic Sword', *History of Religions* 25 (1985), pp. 30–56.
- , 'Portraits of the Ruler: Óláfr Páir Hoskuldsson and Cormac Mac Airt', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 17 (1989), pp. 77–96.
- , 'Textual notes on Descriptions of the Old Irish Chariot and Team', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 4 (1991), pp. 15–36.
- , 'Tripartition in Early Ireland: Cosmic or Social Structure?', in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 156–183.
- , 'Róimid Rígóinmit, Royal Fool: Onomastics and Cultural Valence', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 33 (2005), pp. 41–52.
- Schinkel, Anders, 'Imagination as a Category of History: An Essay Concerning Koselleck's Concepts of Erfahrungsraum and Erwartungshorizont', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 42–54.

- Schmidt, K. H., 'Problems of Celtiberian', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 5 (1992), pp. 37–76.
- Schmidt, Karl Horst, 'Celtic Movements in the First Millennium B. C.', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 20 (1992), pp. 145–78.
- , 'On the Indo-European Background of the Old Irish Preposition', in Sawick, Lea and Shalev, Donna, eds., *Donum Grammaticum: Studies in Latin and Celtic linguistics in Honour of Hannah Rosén*, vol. 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), pp. 307–315.
- , 'On the Linguistic Background of the Personal Pronouns of Old Irish', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 289–294.
- Schødt, Jens Peter, 'Archaeology, Language and Comparative Mythology', in Polomé, Edgar C., ed., *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1996), pp. 184–196.
- Schrijver, Peter, *Studies in the History of Celtic Pronouns and Particles* (Maynooth: The Department of Old Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1997).
- , 'Non-Indo-European Surviving in Ireland in the First Millennium AD', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 195–199.
- , 'Varia I. More on non-Indo-European Surviving in Ireland in the First Millennium AD', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 137–144.
- Scowcroft, R. Mark, 'Leabhar Gabhála—Part I: The Growth of the Text', *Ériu* 38 (1987), pp. 81–142.
- , 'Leabhar Gabhála—Part II: The Growth of the Tradition', *Ériu* 39 (1988), pp. 1–66.
- , 'The Irish Analogues to Beowulf', *Speculum* 74 (1999), pp. 22–64.
- , 'Recht Fáide and Its Glosses in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the Senchus Mar', *Ériu* 53 (2003), pp. 143–50.
- Segal, Robert A., *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Selmer, Carl, ed., *Navigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis: from Early Latin Manuscripts* (Dublin: University of Notre Dame Press [repr. Four Courts Press], 1959 [repr. 1989]).
- Sharpe, Richard, 'Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 3 (1984), pp. 230–270.
- , 'Churches and Communities in Early medieval Ireland: towards a Pastoral Model', in Blair, John and Sharpe, Richard, eds., *Pastoral Care before the Parish* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), pp. 81–109.
- Shaw, David Gary, 'Modernity between Us and Them: The Place of Religion within History', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 1–9.

- Shippey, T. A., *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1976).
- Shore, Laurence, 'The Enduring Power of Racism: A Reconsideration of Winthrop Jordan's White over Black', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 195–226.
- Silke, John, 'Irish Scholarship and the Renaissance, 1580–1673', *Studies in the Renaissance* 20 (1973), pp. 169–206.
- Simms, Katharine, *From Kings to Warlords: the Changing Political Structure of Gaelic Ireland in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987).
- , 'Gaelic Military History and the Later Brehon Law Commentaries', in Ó Háinle, Cathal G. and Meek, Donald E., eds., *Unity in Diversity: Studies in Irish and Scottish Gaelic Language, Literature and History* (Dublin: School of Irish, Trinity College, 2004), pp. 51–67.
- Sims-Williams, Patrick, 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 36 (1998), pp. 1–35.
- Sinnott, Alice Mary, *The Personification of Wisdom* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).
- Sjöblom, Tom, 'Mind-Stories: a Cognitive Approach to the Role of Narratives in Early Irish Tradition', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 47 (2004), pp. 59–72.
- Sjoestedt, M.-L., *Gods and Heroes of the Celts*, ed. Dillon, M. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994).
- Slaughter, M. M., 'Scared Kingship and Antinomianism: Antirrhesis and the Order of Things', *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 4 (1992), pp. 227–235.
- Slotkin, Edgar M., 'Maelgwn Gwynedd: Speculations on a Common Celtic Legend Pattern', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 327–335.
- Slusher, Jeffrey L., 'Runic Wisdom in "Njal's Saga" and Nordic Mythology: Roots of an Oral Legal Tradition in Northern Europe', *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 3 (1991), pp. 21–39.
- Smelik, Bernadette, 'The Structure of the Irish Arthurian Romance Eachtra Mhacaoimh-an-Iolair', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 45 (2003), pp. 43–57.
- Smith, Peter, 'Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend: A Middle-Irish Poem on the Authors and Laws of Ireland', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 8 (1994), pp. 120–150.
- Smith, Roland, 'Bríathartheosc Con Culainn', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 15 (1925), pp. 187–192.

- Smith, Roland M., 'The *Senbriathra Fithail* and Related Texts', *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928), pp. 1–92.
- , 'Fíthal and Flann Fína', *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930), pp. 30–38.
- , 'Further Light on the Finnśruth Fíthal', *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931), pp. 325–331.
- Smith, Roland Mitchell, 'The *Speculum Principum* in Early Irish Literature', *Speculum* 2 (1927), pp. 411–45.
- Smyth, Marina, *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-Century Ireland* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996).
- , 'The Irish Liber De Numeris', in O'Loughlin, Thomas, ed., *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 291–297.
- Spurgeon, G. J., 'The Medieval Town Defenses of Glamorgan', *Studia Celtica* 35 (2001), pp. 161–212.
- Stacey, Robin, 'Translation of the Old Irish tract *Berrad Airechta*', in Charles-Edwards et al., *Lawyers and Laymen: Studies in the History of Law Presented to Professor Dafydd Jenkins on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, pp. 210–233.
- , 'Speaking in Riddles', in Ní Chatháin, Próinséas, ed., *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 243–248.
- Stacey, Robin Chapman, 'Ties That Bind: Immunities in Irish and Welsh Law', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 20 (1990), pp. 39–60.
- , 'Law and Order in the Very Old West: England and Ireland in the Early Middle Ages', in Hudson, Benjamin T. and Ziegler, Vickie, eds., *Crossed Paths: Methodological Approaches to the Celtic Aspect of the European Middle Ages* (London: University Press of America, 1991), pp. 39–60.
- , *The Road to Judgment: From Court to Custom in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).
- , 'Law and Memory in Early Medieval Ireland', *The Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 43–69.
- , 'Instructional Riddles in Welsh Law', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 336–343.
- Stefański, Witold, 'Old Irish Deponent and Passive', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 1 (1988), pp. 13–20.
- Stevenson, Jane, 'The Irish Contribution to Anglo-Latin Hermeneutic Prose', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 268–282.

- Stika, Hans-Peter, 'Approaches to Reconstruction of Early Celtic Land-Use in the Central Neckar Region in Southwestern Germany', *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 8 (1999), pp. 95–103.
- Stokes, Whitley, 'Review of *Contribuzioni allo studio della epigrafia etrusca*', *Revue Celtique* 5 (1881–1883), pp. 228–229.
- , *On the Bodleian fragment of Cormac's Glossary* (London: Philological Society, 1894).
- , 'Annals of Tigernach', *Revue Celtique* 17 (1896), pp. 6–33, 119–263, 336–420.
- , 'Annals of Tigernach', *Revue Celtique* 18 (1897), pp. 9–59, 150–197, 267–303.
- , and Strachan, John, *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus: a collection of Old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose and verse*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901–1903).
- Stokes, Whitley and Windisch, Ernst, eds., *Irische Texte*, vol. 4, part 1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900).
- Strachan, John, *Old-Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old-Irish Glosses*, ed. Bergin, Osborn, 4th edition (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1949 [repr. 1995]).
- Stüber, Karin, *The Historical Morphology of N-Stems in Celtic* (Maynooth: The Department of Old Irish, National University of Ireland, 1998).
- Tatsuki, Akiko, 'The Early Irish Church and Marriage: an Analysis of the *Hibernensis*', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 15 (2001), pp. 195–207.
- Teppo, Juha, 'Why Celtic Cinema is Easier than Celtic Fiction? – A Few Notes from Roddy Doyle to Danny Boyle', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Yläne, Krisi, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 135–146.
- Testen, David, 'Stem-final *-KK- in Celtic Terms for 'Pig'', *Ériu* 50 (1999), pp. 161–164.
- Thompson, Stith, *Motif-index of Folk-literature: a Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-books and Local Legends*, vol. 6, Revised and Enlarged edition (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1955–1958).
- Thomson, Derick S., *The Gaelic Sources of MacPherson's 'Ossian'* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1952).
- Thornton, David E., 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy in Early Medieval Ireland and Wales', in Pryce, Huw, ed., *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 83–98.
- Thurneysen, Rudolf, *Handbuch des Alt-irischen: Grammatik, Texte und Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1909).

- Thurneysen, Rudolf, 'Táin bó Cúailghni (nach H. 2. 17)', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 8 (1912), pp. 525–554.
- , *Zu irischen Handschriften u. Litteraturdenkmälern*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, 1912).
- , 'Die Überlieferung der Táin bó Cúailgne', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 9 (1913), pp. 418–443.
- , 'Allerlei Irisches', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 10 (1915), pp. 421–443.
- , 'Zur Táin bó Cúailgne', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 10 (1915), pp. 205–208.
- , 'Zur keltischen Literatur und Grammatik', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 12 (1918), pp. 271–289.
- , 'Aus dem irischen Recht III', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 15 (1925), pp. 302–376.
- , 'Aus dem irischen Recht IV', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 16 (1927), pp. 167–230.
- , *A Grammar of Old Irish*, ed. Binchy, D. A. and Bergin, Osborn (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1940 [repr. 1993]).
- Toivanen, Pekka, 'The Cognitive Processes and Musical Hierarchies in the Robert ap Huw Manuscript', in Latvio, Riitta, Pietiläinen, Petri and Yläne, Krisi, eds., *Aspects of Celticity: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Expressions of Celticity through the Ages'* (Jyväskylä: The Finnish Society for Celtic Studies, 2000), pp. 47–78.
- Toner, Gregory, 'Authority, Verse and the Transmission of *Senchas*', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 59–84.
- Tranter, Stephen N., 'Systems of Classification in the First Middle Irish Metrical Tract and Their Implications for Comparative Study', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 8 (1996), pp. 97–115.
- , 'Ut Dixit Cicero: A Note on de dligheadh gotha', *Studia Celtica Japonica* 9 (1997), pp. 11–18.
- Trask, R. L., *Historical Linguistics* (London: Arnold, 1996).
- Trevarthen, David, 'Holy Cows: Natural Precursors to the Ritual Year?', *Cosmos* 18 (2002), pp. 35–42.
- Tucker, Aviezer, 'Miracles, Historical Testimonies, and Probabilities', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 373–390.
- Tymoczko, Maria, 'What Questions Should We Ask in Celtic Studies in the new Millennium', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky, ed., *Identifying the 'Celtic'* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 10–29.
- Ua Súilleabháin, Seán and Donnelly, Seán, "'Music Has Ended": the Death of a Harper', *Celtica* 22 (1991), pp. 165–75.

- Uther, Hans-Jörg, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson*, vol. 3 (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004).
- Von Rad, Gerhard, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972 [repr. 1988]).
- Warntijes, Immo, 'The Alternation of the Kingship of Tara 734-944', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 17-18 (2003-4), pp. 394-432.
- Wasserseisen, David J., 'The First Jew in England: 'The Game of the Evangel' and a Hiberno-Latin contribution to Anglo-Jewish History', in Richter, Michael and Picard, Jean-Michel, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 283-288.
- Watkins, Calvert, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- , 'The Old Irish for 'Fleshfork'', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 377-378.
- Watson, J. R., 'Blake and Gwendolen: Territory, Periphery, and the Proper Name', in Carruthers, Gerard and Raws, Alan, eds., *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 85-102.
- Watts, Dorothy, *Christians and Pagans in Roman Britain* (London: Routledge, 1991).
- Webster, Jane, 'Interpretatio': Roman Word Power and the Celtic Gods', *Britannia* 26 (1995), pp. 153-161.
- Weeks, Stuart, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
- West, Martin, 'The Death of Baldr', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004), pp. 1-10.
- Westermann, Claus, *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995).
- Whatmough, Joshua, ed., *The Prae-Italic Dialects of Italy*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).
- White, David Gordon, 'Digging Wells While Houses Burn? Writing Histories of Hinduism in a Time of Identity Politics', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* Theme Issue 45 (2006), pp. 104-131.
- White, Hayden, 'The Public Relevance of Historical Studies: a Rejoinder to Dirk Moses', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 333-338.
- Wiley, Dan M., 'Niall Frossach's True Judgement', *Ériu* 55 (2005), pp. 19-36.
- Willi, Andreas, 'Varia III. Old Irish (h)ussie "just, right, fitting"', *Ériu* 52 (2002), pp. 235-240.

- Williams, J. H. C., *Beyond The Rubicon: Romans and Gauls in Republican Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Wogan-Browne, Jocelyn, 'Queens, Virgins and Mothers: Hagiographic Representations of the Abbess and Her Powers in Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Britain', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 14–35.
- Wong, Donna, 'Poetic Justice/Comic Relief: Aogán Ó Rathaille's Shoes and the Mock-Warrent', in Nagy, Joseph Falaky and Jones, Leslie Ellen, eds., *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 379–394.
- Wood, Charles T., 'The First Two Queens Elizabeth, 1464-1503', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 121–130.
- Wood, Juliette, 'The Celtic Tarot and the Secret Tradition: A Study in Modern Legend Making', *Folklore* 109 (1998), pp. 15–24.
- Wooding, Jonathan M., ed., *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: an Anthology of Criticism* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).
- Woods, David, 'Arculf's Luggage: The Sources for Adomnán De Locis Sanctis', *É* 52 (2002), pp. 25–52.
- Wormald, Patrick, *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image, and Experience* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1999).
- , *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).
- , *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and Its Historian*, ed. Baxter, Stephen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).
- Wright, Rosemary, 'Marking Liturgical Time: The Ritual Year in the Illustrations of the Book of Hours', *Cosmos* 18 (2002), pp. 173–192.
- Wright, Rosemary Muir, 'The Virgin in the Sun and in the Tree', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 36–59.
- York, Michael, 'The Divine Twins in the Celtic Pantheon', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 23 (1995), pp. 83–112.
- Zammito, John, 'Ankersmit and Historical Representation', *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History* 44 (2005), pp. 155–81.
- Zanger, Abby, 'Fashioning the Body Politic: Imagining the Queen in the Marriage of Louis XIV', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 101–120.
- Zelensky, Elizabeth Kristofovich, "'Sophia the Wisdom of God": The Function of Religious Imagery during the Regency of Sophia Alekseevna of Muscovy', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 192–211.
- Zeuss, Johann Kaspar, *Grammatica Celtica*, vol. 2 (Lipsiae: Weidmannos, 1853).

- Zimmer, Stefan, 'Indo-Celtic Connections: Ethic, Magic, and Linguistic', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 29 (2001), pp. 227–229.
- , 'The Making of Myth: Old Irish Airgatlám, Welsh Llaw ereint, Caledonian ...', in *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 295–297.
- Zook, Melinda, 'History's Mary: The Propagation of Queen Mary II, 1689-1694', *Cosmos* 7 (1992), pp. 170–191.

Index

- Acallam Becc*, 97
Acallam na Senórach, 95–98, 106, 119–122, 124, 128, 153, 157, 163, 182
 Ádhamh Ó Cuirnín, 157
 Aed mac Eochu, 85
 áes dána, 138
 Aesop's Fables, 28
 Africa, 15, 26
Ag so chugad, a Chormaic, 106, 107, 128–130
 Aí, 131
Aí Emnach, 75, 94, 103, 113, 163, 179
aidbriud, 62, 126
 Ailb(h)e, 76, 123–127
 Ailill, 81
 Ailill Cestach, 155–158
Aimirgein Glúngel Tuir Tend, 74, 91, 99–101, 106, 114–115, 154–158, 180
airdirc, 148
 Aldfrith of Northumbria, 24, 46, 47, 50, 53, 54, 56, 64, 79–82, 133, 161
amus, 138, 160
 Anglo-Norman, 21, 161
 Anglo-Saxon, 8, 15, 16, 21, 22, 26, 27, 32, 34, 35, 43, 44, 46, 47
 Aodh Ó Dochartaigh, 116
 Aonghas Ó Callanáin, 73
 Aongus, 156
 Aongusa, 156
 Aristotle, 26, 28, 29
 Art Aínfer, 145
as-beir, 143
at-bert, 143
 Athena, 169
 Athens, 169
audacht, 89, 165
Audacht Morainn, 44, 45, 90, 93, 100, 113
Auricept na nÉces, 37
 Bé Chuilli, 131
Beltine, 118
 Beowulf, 28
 Bodmann, 120, 121, 153
 Book of Ballymote, 64, 65, 132
 Book of Ecclesiastes, 28, 32
 Book of Ecclesiasticus, 32
 Book of Fermoy, 64, 68, 69, 74, 107
 Book of Invasions, 156, 158
 Book of Job, 29, 32
 Book of Leinster, 52–54, 114, 132, 133, 139, 153, 161, 162
 Book of Leviticus, 31
 Book of Lismore, 73, 74, 96
 Book of Proverbs, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35, 47–49, 58, 59
 Book of Psalms, 32
 Book of Uí Maine, 86, 132
 Book of Wisdom, 29, 32, 47, 48
 Bres, 131
Bretha Crédine, 179
Bretha Déin Chécht, 90, 110, 164, 179
Bretha Doet Nemthine, 90
Bretha Fachtnai maic Šenchath, 91
Bretha im Gatta, 38, 66, 67, 171
Bretha Morind, 90
Bretha Nemed, 90
Bretha Nemed Dédenach, 165
Bretha Nemed Toísech, 90, 93, 113, 165
Bríathra Flainn Fhína maic Ossu, 23, 33, 35, 43, 46, 47, 50, 52–54, 58, 60, 101, 133
 Broic, 120

- bruiden, 77
Bruiden na hAlmaine, 61, 74, 76–79, 103, 116
Bruidhean Bheag na hAlmhan, 124
 Buide mac Báin, 126

 Cáelchláen, 154, 158
cáin, 41
Cáin Fúithirbe, 41
 Cairbre Lifechair, 69, 72, 74–76, 113, 123, 131
Cambrensis Eversus, 98
 Caoilte, 95, 96, 98, 115, 119, 122–127
 Caratnia, 31, 43, 44, 179, 181
 carbuncle, 36
 Carmun, 131–133
carrmocol, 36
Cath Maige Tuired, 173
 Cathbad, 156
Catonis Disticha, 45
 Celtomania, 1
Cetheoir Comairli Fithail, 99
 Charlemagne, 172
 Cicero, 30
 Cithruad, 157
 Cithrumach, 96
co ber breith, 91, 94
co bér breith im tigrudus, 94
Cóir Anmann, 135, 157
coir n-athcomairc, 127
Collectio Canonum Hibernensis, 40
 Colum Cille, 49
computus, 37
 Conchobar mac Nessa, 105, 157, 165, 166
 Conchobar úa Conchobair Failge, 132
 Conn Cétchathach, 43, 68
 Cormac Ó hEadhra, 129
 Cormac Úa Cuileannáin, 83, 84
Cormac's Dream, 35, 85–87
 Cormac's Glossary, 83–85
Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae, 102–103
 Cosnamhach Mac Aodhagáin, 112
 Cremthann Nia Náir, 101
 Cú Chulainn, 24, 49, 53, 61, 63, 68, 125, 126, 151
cumal, 63, 67, 68
 Cumall, 119, 153
díthech, 63
 Dagda, 83
dairt, 67
 Dáiví Ó Duibhgeanainn, 77
De Officiis, 30
debach, 149
 Decision as to Cormac's Sword, 61–68, 158, 183
deibech, 149
deibhidhe, 117
 Diarmaid mac Cearbhall, 122
 Diarmaid Ó Duinn, 117
 Diarmait mac Mael na mBó, 132
dimdach, 148
dimdaig, 148
dindsenchas, 61, 133
díthach, 63
do-beir, 80
dochor, 148
 Domhnall, 109
 Donnchadh, 109
Duanaire Finn, 53, 97, 103, 106, 116, 153, 157, 182
 Duanaire Finn VI, 117–119
 Duanaire Finn XLIII, 119–122
 Duanaire Finn XLVII, 122–128
 Dubdrenn, 61, 63, 65–68
 Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh, 98
 Dubháltach mac Séamuis, 65
 Dubháltach Óg, *see* Dubhaltach mac Seamuis
 Dubthach maccu Lugair, 87, 88
 Dumha Mhuc, 117
Dunanaire Finn, 163

Echtra Cormaic i Tír Tairngiri, 61, 64
Echtrae Chonnlaí, 36, 181
 Edmund Butler, 96
 Egypt, 15
 Émile Durkheim, 175
episcopus, 102
epscop, 102
éraicc, 110
éric, 78
éthech, 63

- Exeter Book*, 43
 Extract from the Book of Fermoy, 68–72

 Fachtna, 91, 154–158
 Fachtna Fáthach, 157, 158
fāthaig, 148
féigbriathrach, 166
fénechas, 107
 Fenian, 19, 53, 54, 77, 78, 95, 97, 103, 106, 115–118, 121, 128, 150, 153, 162, 182
 Fer Coícat, 157
fer midboth, 61, 66, 67
 Fergus Finnbheóil, 76, 78, 120
 Fíachu Mullethan, 72
fiad, 148
fianaigecht, 133–135, 154, 157, 178
 Fianna, 76, 95, 97, 122, 131
fili, 135
filidecht, 86
fine, 155
 Finghin Mac Carthaigh Riabhach, 73
 Finn mac Cumail, 19, 22, 53, 54, 71, 76–78, 95–97, 106, 116–123, 125–128, 131, 135, 136, 153, 154, 157, 163, 178
 Finnгаine, 145
 Finnlaech Ó Cathasaigh, 96
Finnsruth Fíthail, 42, 53, 75, 90–95, 98, 99, 113, 151, 161, 163, 164
 Fintan, 61, 65, 74, 76, 165, 166, 184
 Flaithrí, 42, 76, 78, 79, 99, 101, 104, 113, 117–119, 123, 152
 Flaithrí Ó Duibhgeannáin, 100
 Flann Fína, *see* Aldfrith of Northumbria
Fled Bricrenn, 158
Foras Feasa ar Éirinn, 54, 99–102, 104, 183
Forbuis Droma Damhghaire, 72–77, 103, 162
fortach, 67
 Fróech, 36

 Gabrial mac Conchobhair Ó Deorain, 109
geis, 117
 genealogy, 153–159
 Geoffrey Keating, 54, 80, 94, 113, 165
 Georges Dumézil, 35, 168–171, 175, 176, 178, 184

gíall, 66
 Gilla in Choimded Úa Cormaic, 114
 Giolla Íosa, 65
 Gi(o)lla na Naomh mac Duinn Shléibhe mhic Aodhagáin, 50, 52, 96, 109, 112, 113
 Giraldus Cambrensis, 98
 Glangen, 155, 159
 Gofannon, 181
 Gofynyon, 181
 Goibniu, 181
 Goll mac Morna, 76–78
 Great Book of Lecan, 65, 86, 132
Gúbretha Caratniad, 42–44, 90, 92, 93

hanes, 84
Havamál, 16
 Hebrew, 176, 177
 Heptads, 43, 48, 52
 Hesiod, 30
hinund, 148

 Icelandic, 15, 16, 22, 32
imbas forosnai, 83
immram, 45
 Indo-European, 29, 33, 35, 168–171, 174, 176, 178, 184
 Irial Mac Aonghusa Uí Uiginn, 128
 Irish World Chronicle, 173
is ann sin, 77
 Isadore of Seville, 33

 James Butler, 96
 John Beaton, 135, 157

 King Izezi, 26

laogh, 85
laogh bó, 83, 85
Leabhar Breac, 84
Leabhar Í Eadhra, 129
linfes, 148
 Loch Luig, 117
 Lochlainnach, 76
 Lochlann, 117
lóeg, 85
 Lóegaire, 49, 87, 101, 115
 Lombards, 39

- Lúcas Ó Dalláin, 86
 Lug Láebach, 131
 Lugaid mac Lugna, 85
 Lughnasa, 131
 Lunna, 117

 Míchéal Ó Cléirigh, 74
macc béo athar, 66
 Machiavelli, 44
 Maghnus Ó Duibhgeannáin, 64
Männerbund, 170
 Marcus Aurelius, 30
 Medb, 19, 22, 81
Meditations, 30
 Mesopotamia, 15, 16
Metrical Dindsenchas, 46, 106, 130–134
 Morann, 32, 44, 48, 61, 89, 90, 93, 95, 113, 154, 155, 165–167, 179–182, 184
muad, 149
 Muiredach, 156
 Muirne, 119

nídebech, 149
 Neire, 93, 113, 165
 Nemthenn, 90
 New Testament, 176
 Nia, 85, 87, 103
 Nicaea, 39
 Noíse, 156
nomen iudicis, 83
 Norse, 22
 Northumbria, 21, 34

 óenach, 132
óenach, 46, 131, 133, 134
 Óengus, 155, 156, 159
 Oisín, 123
 Old Testament, 14, 15, 24, 28, 29, 32, 35, 36, 38, 40, 47, 56, 58, 86, 88, 171, 176, 180, 181
ollamh, 129
ordairc, 148
 Ormond, 112
 Ossian, 134–135

 Partholón, 156

peregrinus, 32
 Pericles, 29
 Pilip Ballach Ó Duibhgeannáin, 112
 Plato, 29
 Poseidon, 169

rannaigecht, 137
 Ráth Aichle, 68
recht aicnid, 88
 Redg Cáinte, 125
 Reth, 156
rígfénnid, 118
 Robeartus Mac Sithigh, 64, 65
rogail, 149
roscad, 43, 72, 107–109, 156
 Rudraige, 155, 156, 158, 183, 184

 Sadhbh, 96
Saltair Cormaic, 61, 166
Samain, 118
sanas, 84
Sanas Chormaic, 83, 84
 Saordálach Óg mac Diarmada, 109
 Saturn, 27, 44
 Saxons, 172
Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó, 81, 101
 Seán Buidhe Ó Cléirigh, 96
 Seán mac Aedagáin, 92
 Sech, 155, 156, 158
Senbríathra Fíthail, 23, 52, 58, 79, 80, 133, 161
 Sencha, 154, 158, 159
 Sencha mac Ailella, 154, 165, 166, 184
 Senchaid, 155, 156, 158
Senchas fer n-Alban, 86
Senchas Már, 7, 38, 40, 58, 87–91, 99–101, 103, 114, 156–158, 180
Senchas Síil Ír, 156
senchus, 142
sét, 68, 78
síd, 77
 Socht, 2, 42, 61, 63, 65–68, 91–94, 104, 113, 152, 155, 158, 159, 162
 Socrates, 29
 Solamh Ó Droma, 64, 65
 Solomon, 29

- Solomon and Saturn*, 44
 Solon, 29
 Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, 116
 Song of Songs, 29, 32
speculum, 113
Speculum Principis, 26, 34, 42, 44, 90, 99
 St Brigit, 83
 St Columba, 95
 St Patrick, 7, 8, 19, 40, 49, 53, 54, 58, 83, 87,
 88, 90, 95–98, 101, 102, 105, 114,
 115, 128, 153, 177
 St Paul, 88

 Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn, 129, 130
 Tadhg Ó Máille, 96
Táin Bó Cúailnge, 2, 19, 53, 81, 154, 158, 165
Táin Bó Fraích, 10, 19, 36, 87
Tecosca Cormaic, 24, 28, 34, 35, 42–45, 47,
 48, 54, 69, 93, 113, 133
 Temair Mairce, 119
 The Instruction of the Vizier Ptahhotep, 26
The Prince, 44
 Tíbraite Tírech, 63
Trecheng Breth Féne, 43, 46
 Trénmór, 119, 153
Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis, 100
túath, 94
túatha, 66
 Tuatha Dé Danann, 10, 131, 173
 Tuathal Ó hUiginn, 129

 Uí Néill, 65, 72, 136, 156
 Uislenn, 156
 UTILIOS, 102

Vita Kentigerni, 87

Works and Days, 30

 Yellow Book of Lecan, 64, 65, 83, 84

 Zeus, 169